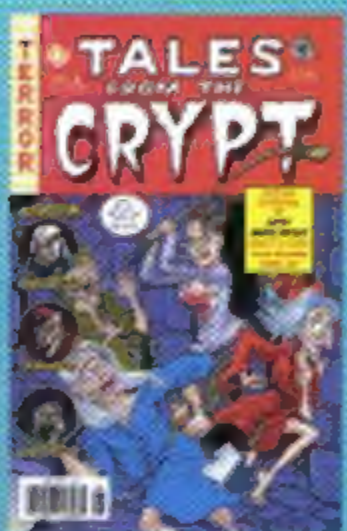


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COVER B

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“SHE WHO WOULD RULE
THE WORLD”

CHRISTIAN ZANIER
WRITER, ARTIST, LETTERER,
COLORIST

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PAPERCUT Z

NO. 8
ALL-NEW!

TALES FROM THE CRYPT



1 of 2
COVERS

IN THIS ISSUE:
AN ALL-NEW STORY BY
**JOE R. LANSDALE &
JOHN L. LANSDALE**
CHAMPION MOJO STORYTELLERS!

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER

\$3.95 US

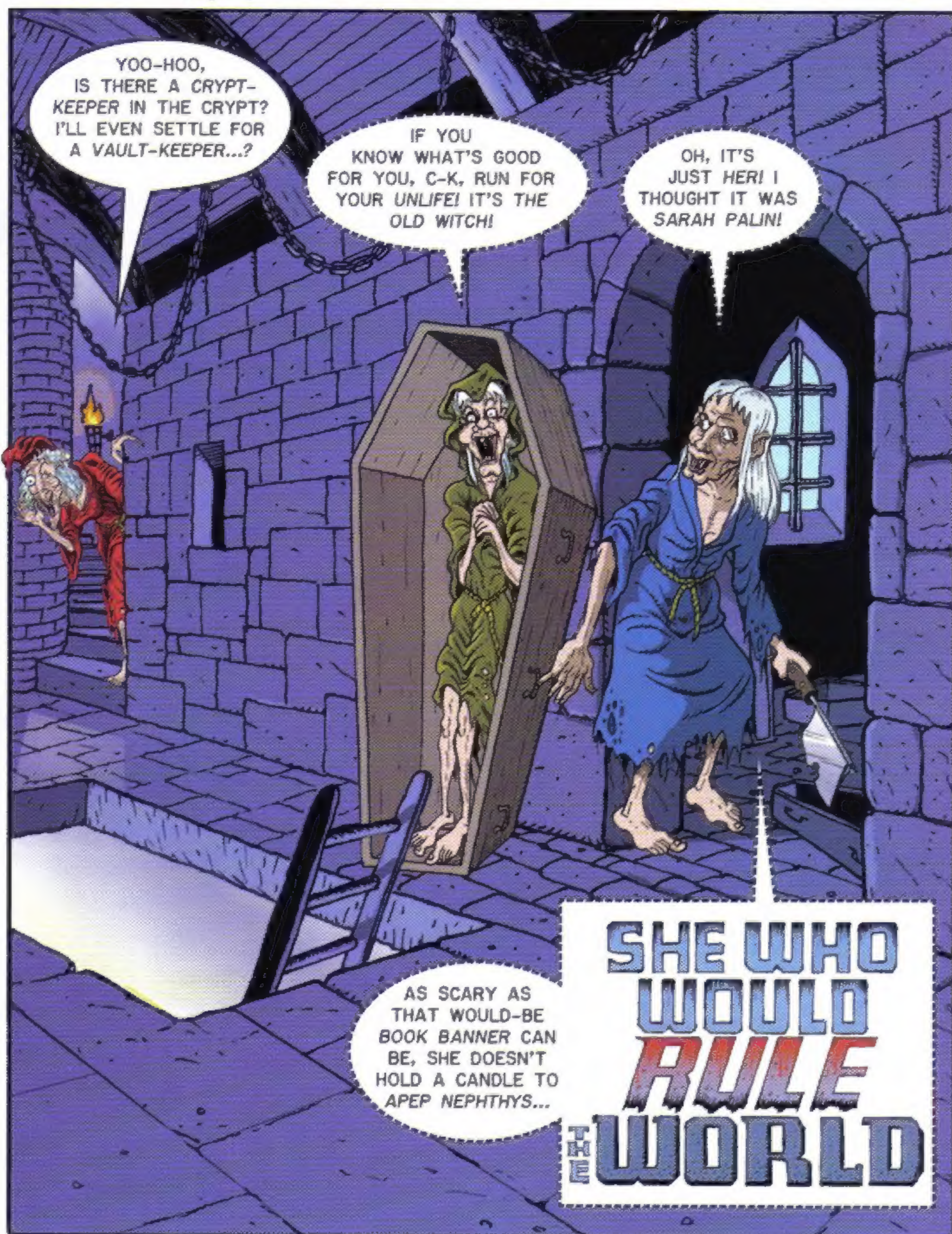


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THE CRYPT OF TERROR



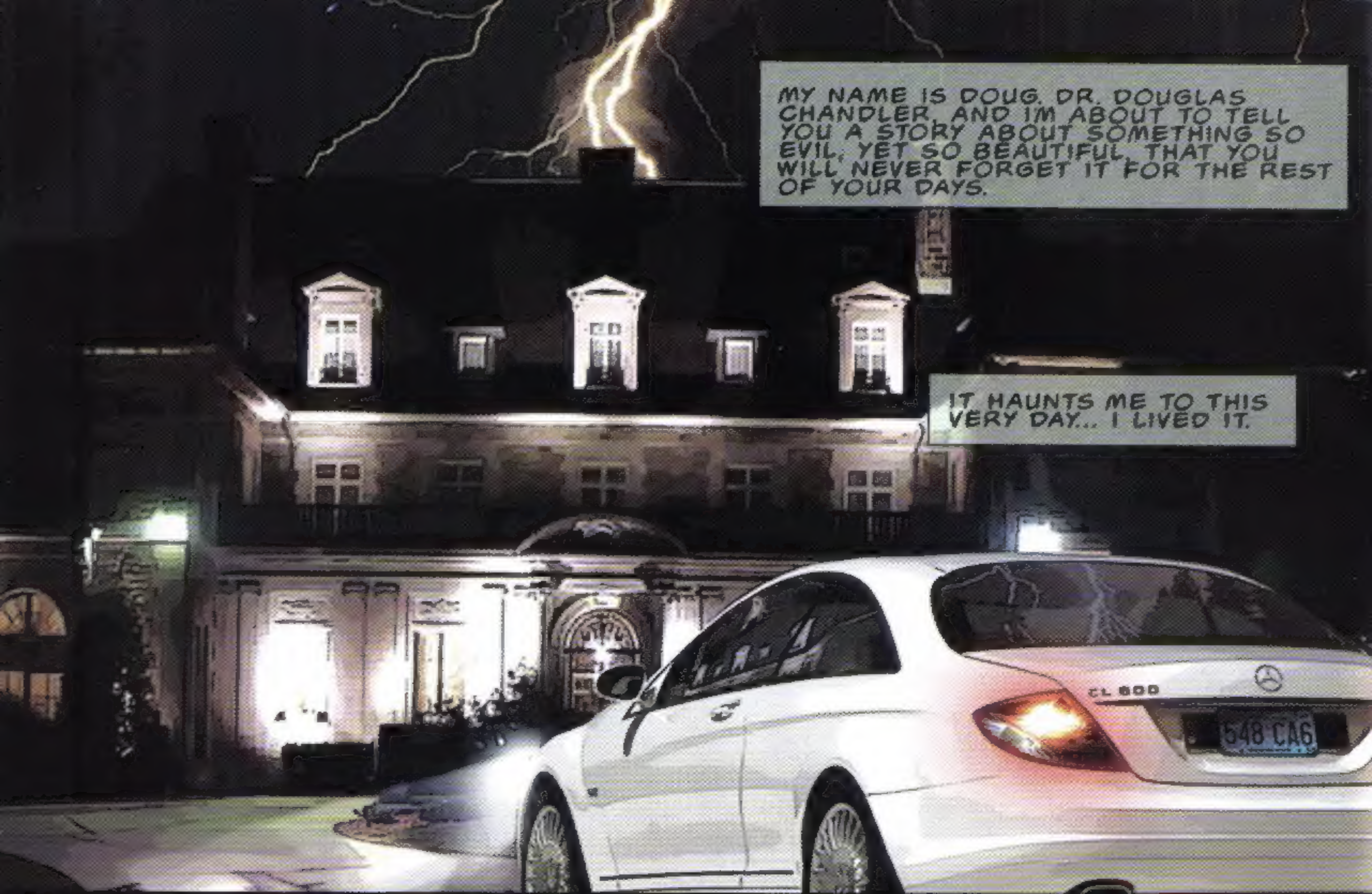
YOO-HOO,
IS THERE A CRYPT-
KEEPER IN THE CRYPT?
I'LL EVEN SETTLE FOR
A VAULT-KEEPER...?

IF YOU
KNOW WHAT'S GOOD
FOR YOU, C-K, RUN FOR
YOUR UNLIFE! IT'S THE
OLD WITCH!

OH, IT'S
JUST HER! I
THOUGHT IT WAS
SARAH PALIN!

AS SCARY AS
THAT WOULD-BE
BOOK BANNER CAN
BE, SHE DOESN'T
HOLD A CANDLE TO
APEP NEPTHYS...

**SHE WHO
WOULD
RULE
THE WORLD**



MY NAME IS DOUG, DR. DOUGLAS CHANDLER, AND I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU A STORY ABOUT SOMETHING SO EVIL, YET SO BEAUTIFUL, THAT YOU WILL NEVER FORGET IT FOR THE REST OF YOUR DAYS.

IT HAUNTS ME TO THIS VERY DAY... I LIVED IT.

I HADN'T HEARD FROM ALBERT SCOTTSDALE IN YEARS SINCE MEDICAL SCHOOL. HE WAS ONE OF MY PROFESSORS.

A BRILLIANT GENETICIST AND SURGEON, HE WAS MY MENTOR AND SOON AFTER A FRIEND.

RECENTLY HE CALLED UP AND ASKED ME TO COME TO HIS HOME AND PRIVATE CLINIC TO SEE HIM WITH NO EXPLANATION.



DOUG, COME IN. HOW ARE YOU MY BOY?

HELLO ALBERT. YOU'RE LOOKING WELL.



AH! WHOA GIRL, DOWN GIRL.



WAIT
A MIN...

HER
HIP, HER LEG,
THEY'RE
WORKING.

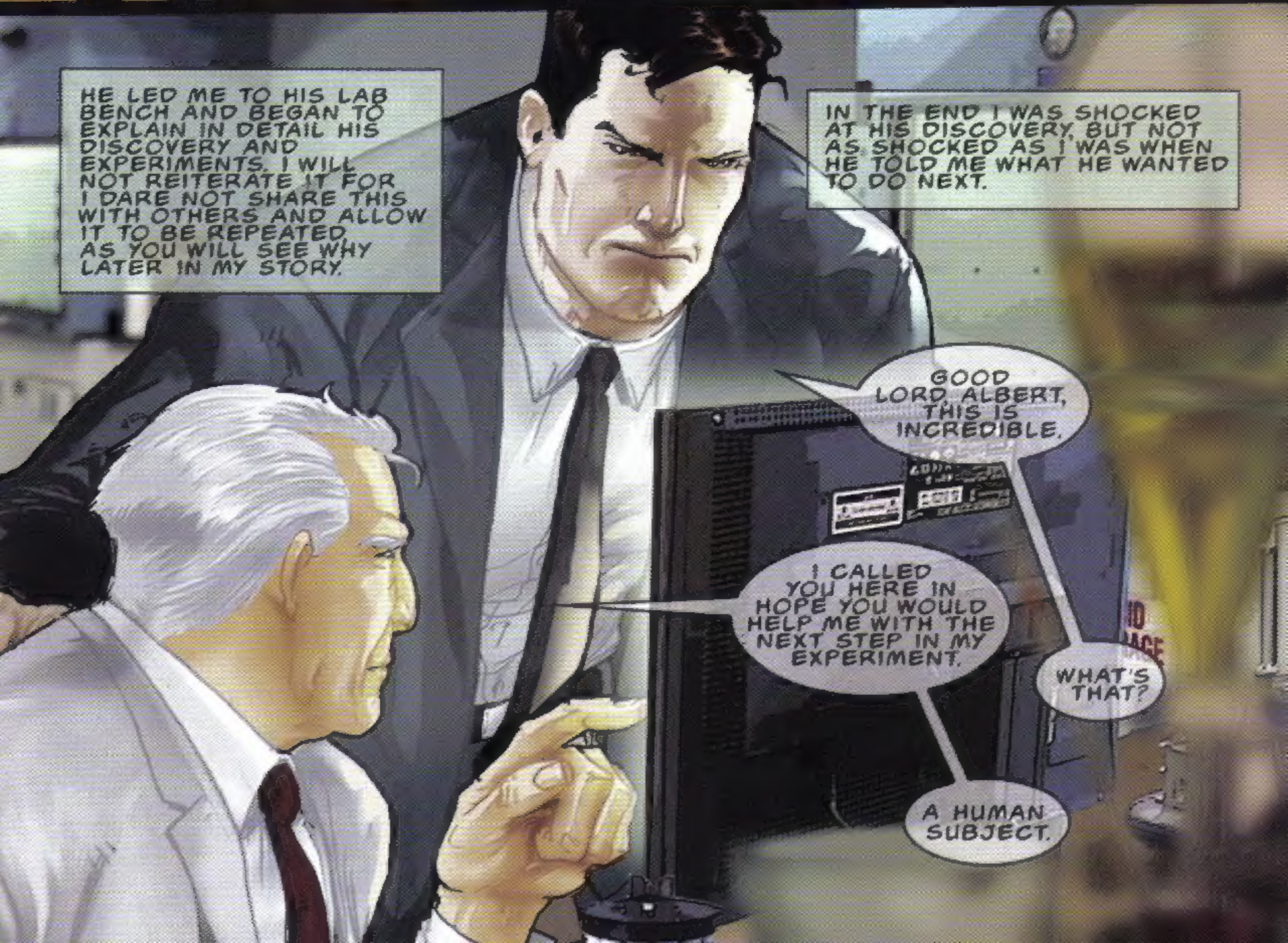
ALBERT,
HOW CAN
THAT BE?



THAT'S
WHY I CALLED
YOU HERE.

I'VE FOUND
A WAY TO ALLOW
A LIVING CREATURE TO
ADAPT TO AUTOMATICALLY
CHANGE AT A GENETIC
LEVEL TO ADAPT TO ANY
PHYSICAL DAMAGE,
INJURY OR
DISEASE.

BUT HOW?



HE LED ME TO HIS LAB
BENCH AND BEGAN TO
EXPLAIN IN DETAIL HIS
DISCOVERY AND
EXPERIMENTS. I WILL
NOT REITERATE IT FOR
I DARE NOT SHARE THIS
WITH OTHERS AND ALLOW
IT TO BE REPEATED
AS YOU WILL SEE WHY
LATER IN MY STORY.

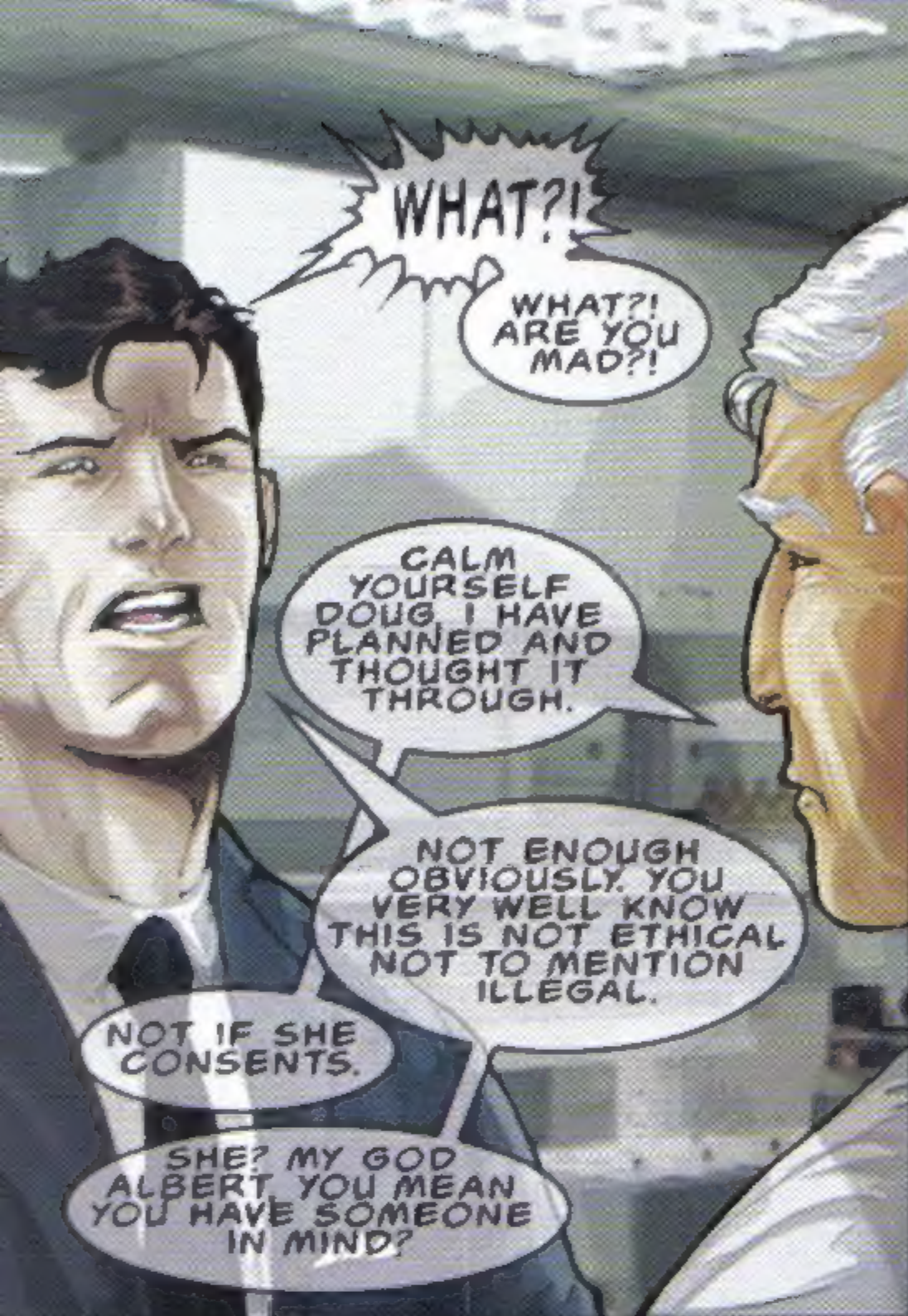
IN THE END I WAS SHOCKED
AT HIS DISCOVERY, BUT NOT
AS SHOCKED AS I WAS WHEN
HE TOLD ME WHAT HE WANTED
TO DO NEXT.

GOOD
LORD, ALBERT,
THIS IS
INCREDIBLE.

I CALLED
YOU HERE IN
HOPE YOU WOULD
HELP ME WITH THE
NEXT STEP IN MY
EXPERIMENT.

WHAT'S
THAT?

A HUMAN
SUBJECT.



WHAT?!

WHAT?!
ARE YOU
MAD?!

CALM
YOURSELF
DOUG, I HAVE
PLANNED AND
THOUGHT IT
THROUGH.

NOT ENOUGH
OBVIOUSLY. YOU
VERY WELL KNOW
THIS IS NOT ETHICAL
NOT TO MENTION
ILLEGAL.

NOT IF SHE
CONSENTS.

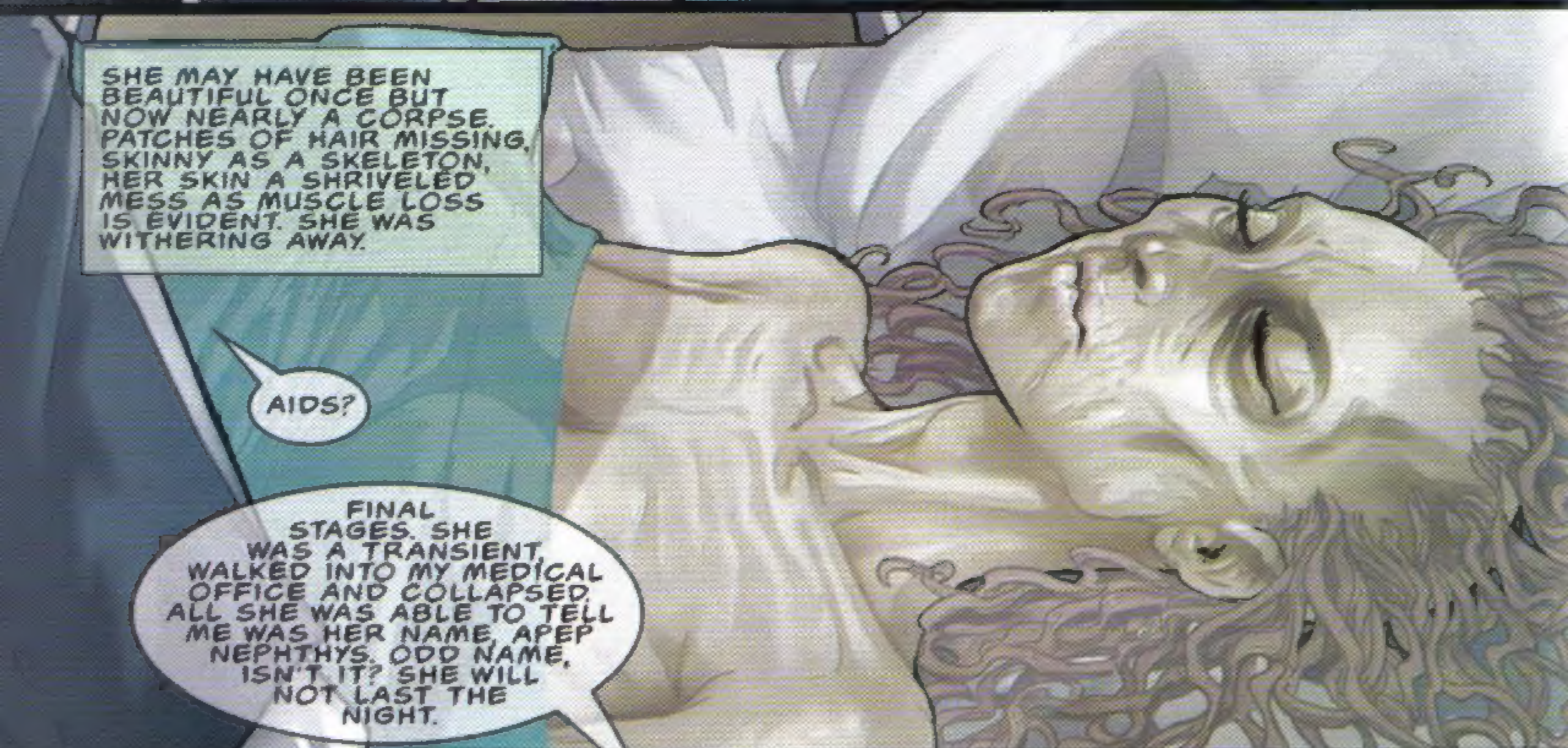
SHE? MY GOD
ALBERT, YOU MEAN
YOU HAVE SOMEONE
IN MIND?



YES. IN
THE NEXT
ROOM IN MY
PRIVATE
SURGERY.

MY GOD,
ALBERT!

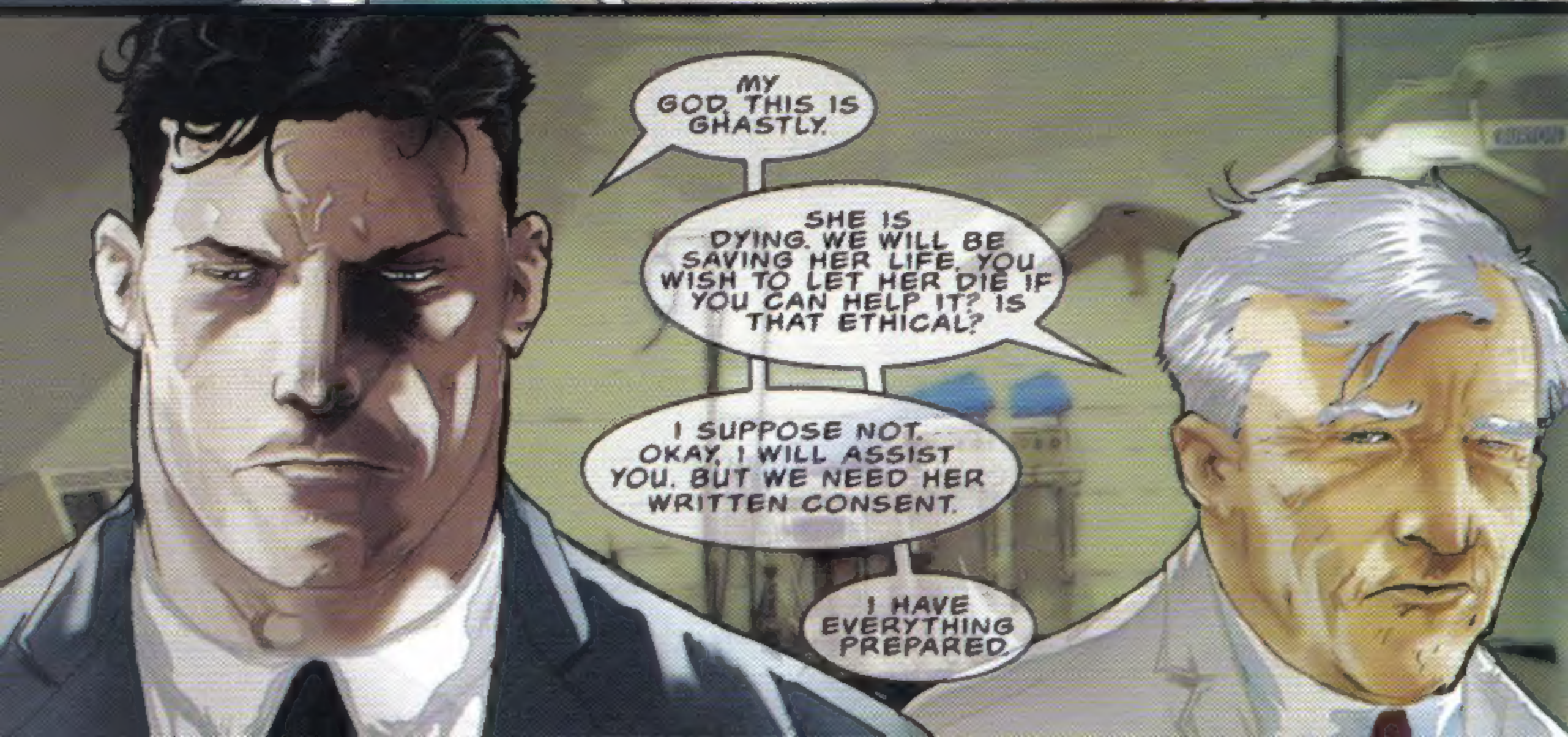
WITH MY HEART RACING TO
BURST OUT OF MY CHEST
I RAN INTO THE SURGERY
ROOM AND TO MY UTTER
ASTONISHMENT, THERE A
WOMAN LAY.



SHE MAY HAVE BEEN
BEAUTIFUL ONCE BUT
NOW NEARLY A CORPSE.
PATCHES OF HAIR MISSING,
SKINNY AS A SKELETON,
HER SKIN A SHRIVELED
MESS AS MUSCLE LOSS
IS EVIDENT. SHE WAS
WITHERING AWAY.

AIDS?

FINAL
STAGES. SHE
WAS A TRANSIENT.
WALKED INTO MY MEDICAL
OFFICE AND COLLAPSED.
ALL SHE WAS ABLE TO TELL
ME WAS HER NAME, APEP
NEPHTHYS, ODD NAME,
ISN'T IT? SHE WILL
NOT LAST THE
NIGHT.



MY
GOD, THIS IS
GHASTLY.

SHE IS
DYING. WE WILL BE
SAVING HER LIFE. YOU
WISH TO LET HER DIE IF
YOU CAN HELP IT? IS
THAT ETHICAL?

I SUPPOSE NOT.
OKAY, I WILL ASSIST
YOU. BUT WE NEED HER
WRITTEN CONSENT.

I HAVE
EVERYTHING
PREPARED.



MISS NEPHTHYS, ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MY FRIEND AND ONE OF THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST YOUNG DOCTORS TODAY.

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE TRYING TO HOOK ME UP, UGH... A LITTLE LATE, DON'T YOU THINK D.DOG.

MISS NEPHTHYS, I...

HELL... HEY HANDSOME...

HUH... WHAT'S THAT MISS NEPHTHYS?

UNGH... DON'T BE SO BASHFUL, YOU ARE VERY HANDSOME.

WH... WHA... WHAT ARE MY THE... UHN... ODDS?

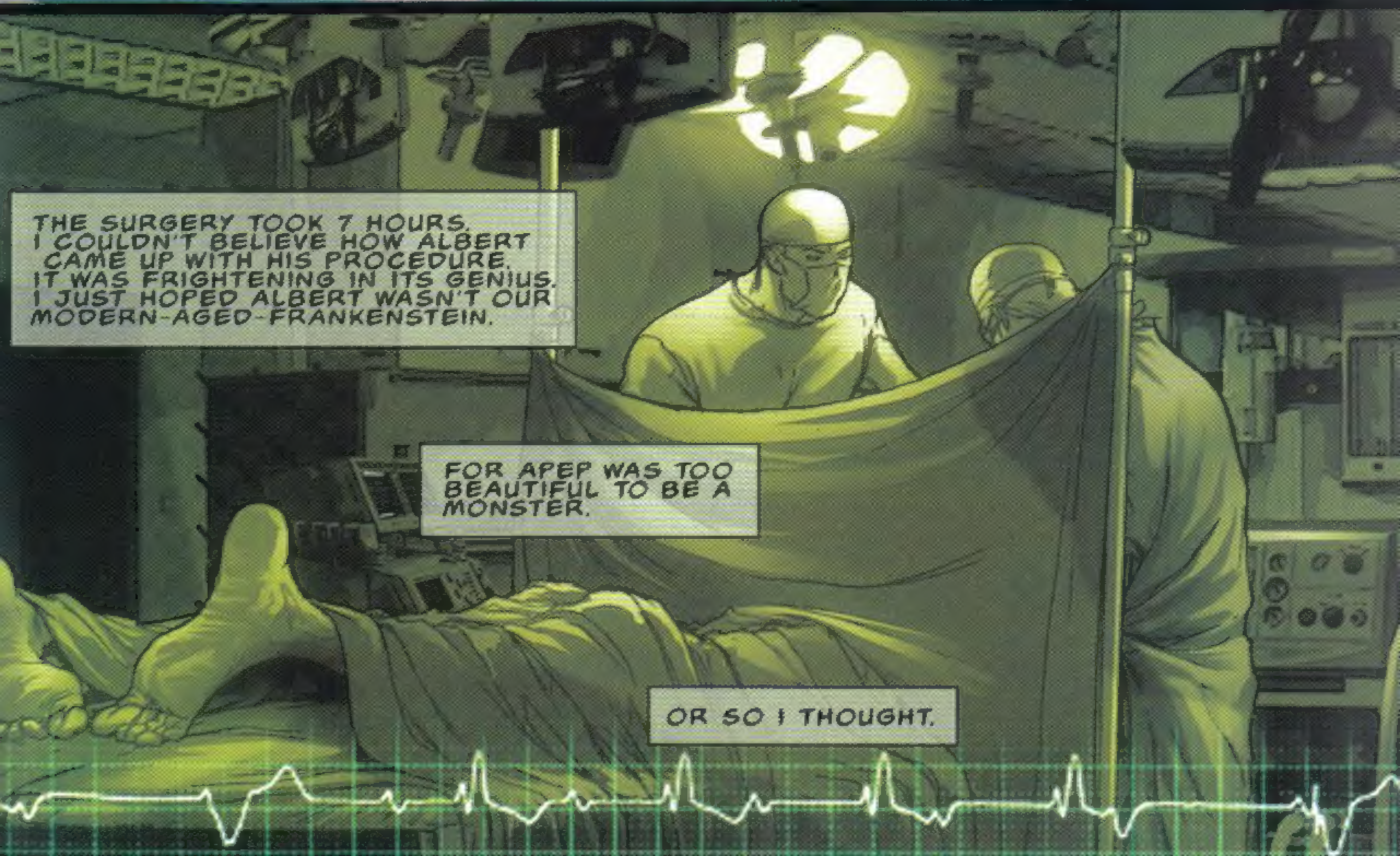
MISS NEPHTHYS, ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE FULLY AWARE OF WHAT DR SCOTTS DALE IS ASKING OF YOU?

ODDS? WELL, YOU MAY NOT SURVIVE THE NIGHT. IF IT FAILS, NOTHING CHANGES, BUT IF IT WORKS...

YOU SURE KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO CHARM A GIRL.

I'M ALL YOURS, HANDSOME.

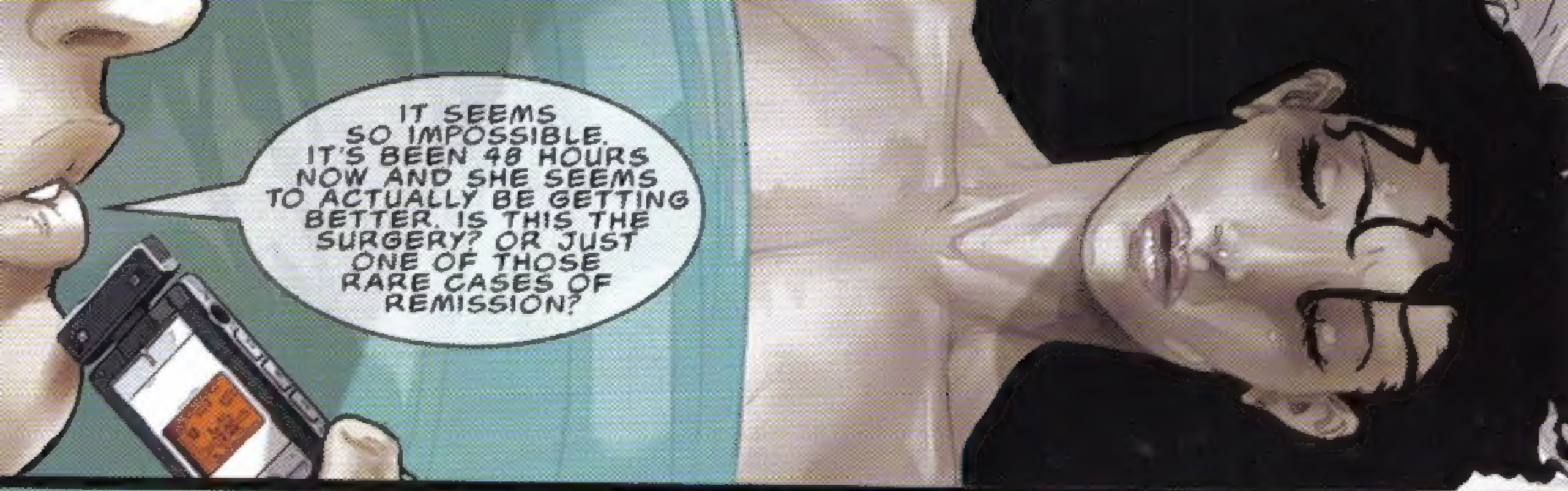
WH... WHERE DO I SIGN... UP?



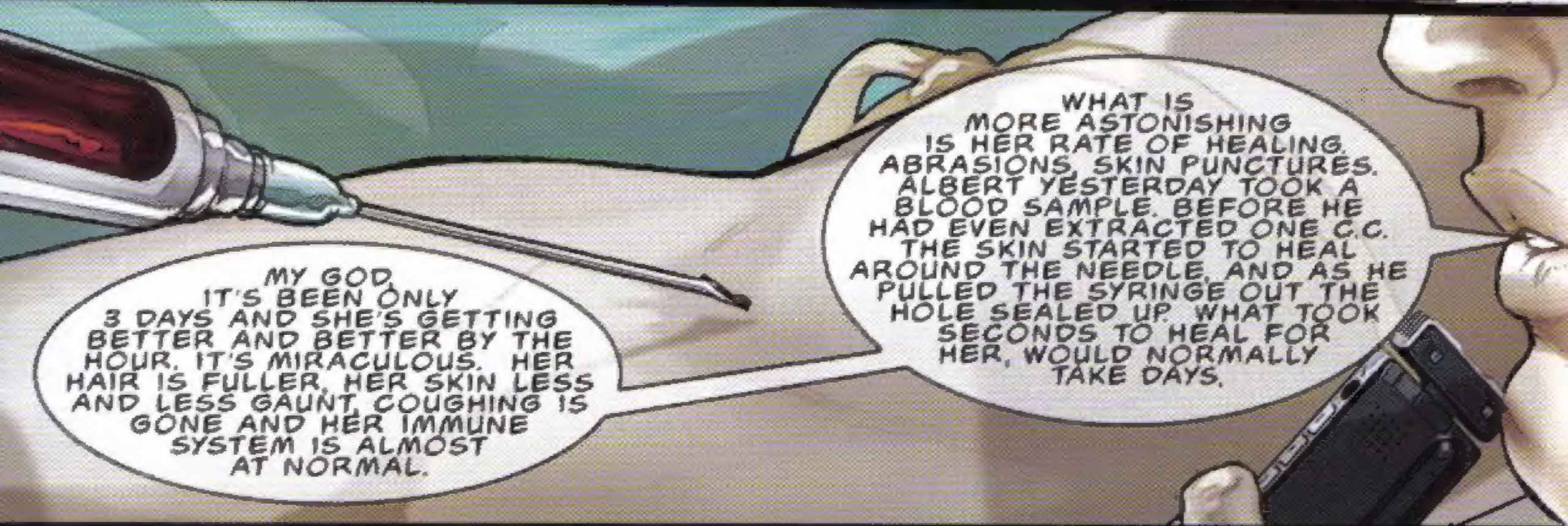
THE SURGERY TOOK 7 HOURS. I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW ALBERT CAME UP WITH HIS PROCEDURE. IT WAS FRIGHTENING IN ITS GENIUS. I JUST HOPED ALBERT WASN'T OUR MODERN-AGED-FRANKENSTEIN.

FOR APEP WAS TOO BEAUTIFUL TO BE A MONSTER.

OR SO I THOUGHT.



IT SEEMS SO IMPOSSIBLE. IT'S BEEN 48 HOURS NOW AND SHE SEEMS TO ACTUALLY BE GETTING BETTER. IS THIS THE SURGERY? OR JUST ONE OF THOSE RARE CASES OF REMISSION?

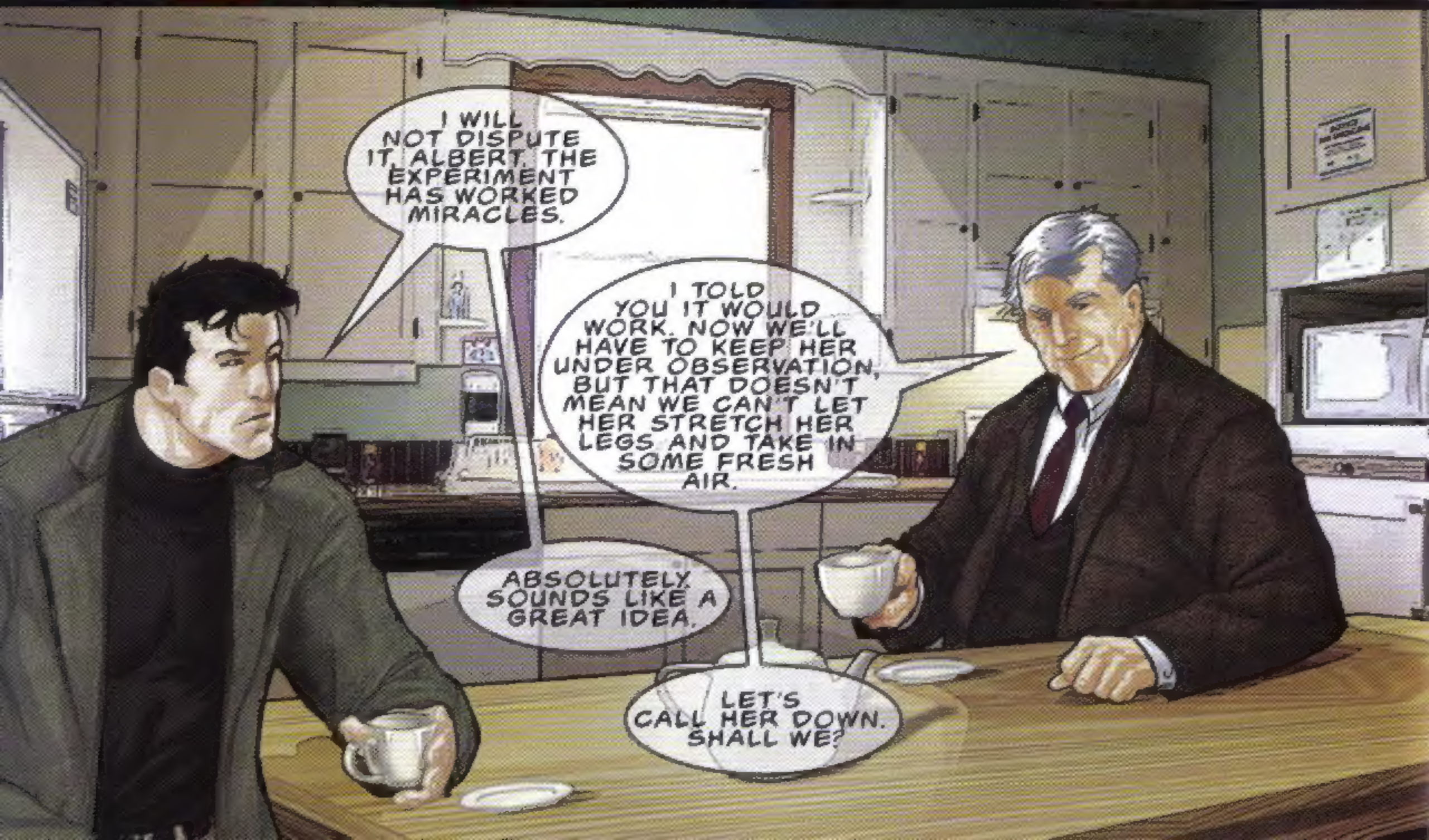


WHAT IS MORE ASTONISHING IS HER RATE OF HEALING. ABRASIONS, SKIN PUNCTURES. ALBERT YESTERDAY TOOK A BLOOD SAMPLE. BEFORE HE HAD EVEN EXTRACTED ONE C.C. THE SKIN STARTED TO HEAL AROUND THE NEEDLE, AND AS HE PULLED THE SYRINGE OUT THE HOLE SEALED UP. WHAT TOOK SECONDS TO HEAL FOR HER, WOULD NORMALLY TAKE DAYS.

MY GOD, IT'S BEEN ONLY 3 DAYS AND SHE'S GETTING BETTER AND BETTER BY THE HOUR. IT'S MIRACULOUS. HER HAIR IS FULLER, HER SKIN LESS AND LESS GAUNT, COUGHING IS GONE AND HER IMMUNE SYSTEM IS ALMOST AT NORMAL.



IT'S BEEN A WEEK AND TWO DAYS SINCE THE SURGERY AND THE HIV SEEMS TO BE COMPLETELY INERT. A CURE FOR AIDS, IT'S ALMOST UNFATHOMABLE, BUT SHE IS THE PROOF. HOW FAR CAN THIS GO?



I WILL NOT DISPUTE IT, ALBERT. THE EXPERIMENT HAS WORKED MIRACLES.

I TOLD YOU IT WOULD WORK. NOW WE'LL HAVE TO KEEP HER UNDER OBSERVATION, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE CAN'T LET HER STRETCH HER LEGS AND TAKE IN SOME FRESH AIR.

ABSOLUTELY. SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT IDEA.

LET'S CALL HER DOWN. SHALL WE?



I'M
ALREADY
PRESENT,
DOCTOR.

AH MISS
NEPHTHYS, NICE
TO SEE YOU UP
AND ABOUT.

I FEEL
EXCELLENT.
THANK
YOU.

OH
HELLO, HAND-
SOME..

HELLO, APEP.

I HAVE
SOME PLEASANT
NEWS. DOUG HERE
IS GOING TO TAKE
YOU FOR A WALK IN
THE PARK.

OH?

YES,
DOUG IS
DROPPING
ME OFF AT THE
HOSPITAL NEARBY
AND YOU CAN TAG
ALONG. SOUND
GOOD, MY
DEAR?

ABSOLUTELY.



OKAY YOU
TWO; THE PARK
IS ACROSS THE
STREET.

APEP
YOU JUST GO
AHEAD. I'D LIKE
TO TALK TO DOUG A
MOMENT. IF YOU FEEL
TIRED AT ALL THERE
ARE NICE BENCHES
THERE FOR YOU
TO SIT AND
REST.

GLADLY.

APEP
MENTIONED
HAVING NO FAMILY
OR FRIENDS SO I AM
GOING TO CONTINUE
TO LET HER STAY
AT THE HOUSE
FOR A TIME.

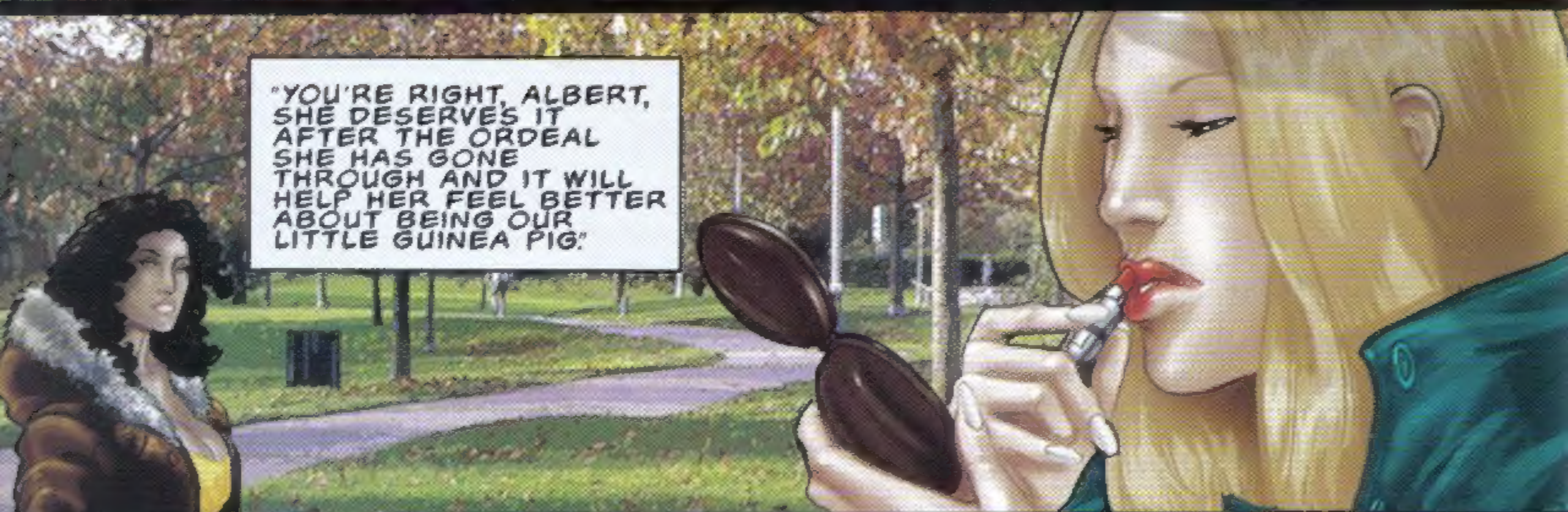
THAT'S
A FINE
IDEA.



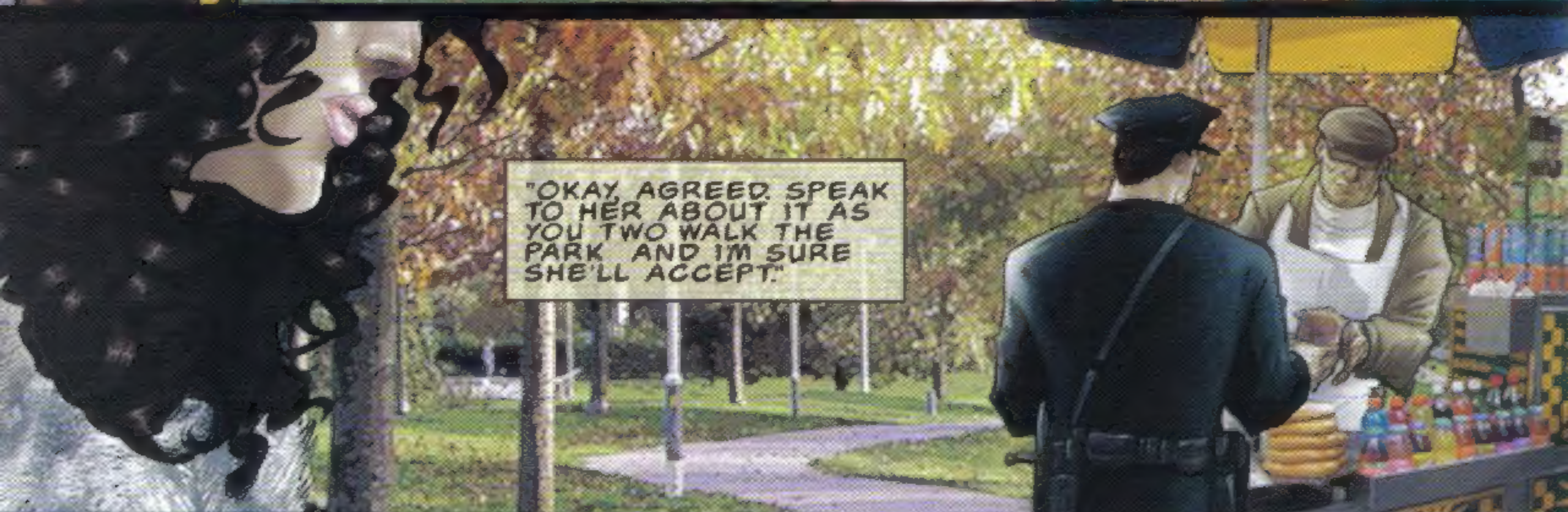
"WE CAN OBSERVE THE FURTHER EFFECTS OF THE PROCEDURE."



"I CAN PAY HER ROOM AND BOARD AS WELL AS SAY 250 A WEEK, SO IT GIVES HER THE OPPORTUNITY TO START HER NEW LIFE ON A POSITIVE NOTE."



"YOU'RE RIGHT, ALBERT, SHE DESERVES IT AFTER THE ORDEAL SHE HAS GONE THROUGH AND IT WILL HELP HER FEEL BETTER ABOUT BEING OUR LITTLE GUINEA PIG."



"OKAY AGREED. SPEAK TO HER ABOUT IT AS YOU TWO WALK THE PARK AND I'M SURE SHE'LL ACCEPT."



"GO ON, CATCH UP WITH HER BEFORE SHE GETS HERSELF INTO TROUBLE ON HER FIRST DAY OUT."



WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!

IT CAME FROM THE THE PARK.

OH, NO, APEP!



OH, MY GOD, APEP!

YOU KNOW THIS WOMAN?

YES, WHAT'S THE MATTER?



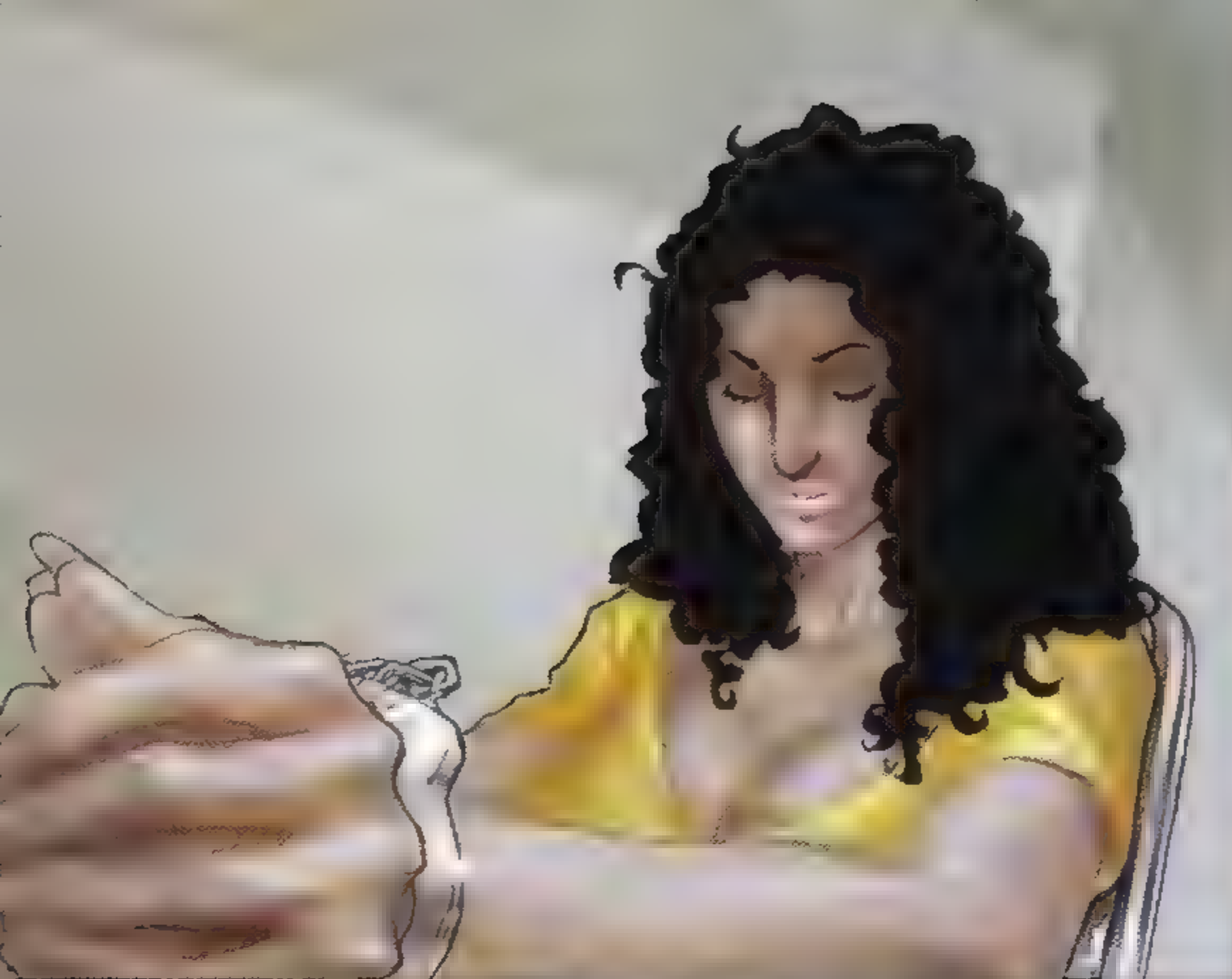
PLENTY. YOUR GIRLFRIEND HERE TOOK MY GUN OUT OF MY HOLSTER AND SHOT A YOUNG WOMAN TO DEATH. MORE MAY HAVE BEEN HURT OR KILLED IF I HADN'T STOPPED HER.

THERE MUST BE A MISTAKE.

YES, HERS. PRE-MEDITATED MURDER. COME ON, SISTER, YOU'RE GOING DOWNTOWN



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SO
SHE JUST
TOOK OFFICER
O'ROURKE'S GUN
AND...



ACCORDING
TO WITNESSES,
SHE PULLED THE GUN OUT
OF ITS HOLSTER, WALKED
RIGHT UP TO THE GIRL,
AND SHOT HER IN THE
HEAD. TWICE.

WE HAVE
THE WITNESSES
READY TO IDENTIFY
HER ALONG WITH O'ROURKE
HERE AS SOON AS HER
APPOINTED DEFENDER
ARRIVES.

...SHOT
A WOMAN
DOWN.



OH, MY
LORD!

WHAT IS IT,
O'ROURKE?

THAT'S
NOT HER!

OFFICER,
THIS NO TIME
FOR JOKES.



SIR,
I'M TELLING
YOU, THAT IS NOT
THE WOMAN I
ARRESTED.





MURDER!?

YOU CALL IT MURDER? DO YOU CALL A TIGRESS KILLING AN ELK MURDER? DO YOU CALL A FALCON KILLING A RODENT MURDER?

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

WHAT I'M SAYING, HANDSOME, IS THAT IT'S THE ORDER OF THE SPECIES. SHE WAS AS BEAUTIFUL AS I AND I DIDN'T LIKE IT. SHE WAS WEAK, I WAS STRONG, I WAS THE VICTOR. SHE WAS MY INFERIOR.

MY GOD, YOU MEAN YOU DID MURDER THAT WOMAN?!



SO, YOU ARE SUPERIOR THEN?

YOU SHOULD KNOW, HANDSOME, YOU HELPED MAKE ME WHAT I AM NOW.



APEP HOW CAN YOU...?

SILENCE, I DO NOT WISH TO SPEAK OF IT ANYMORE. I'M TIRED AND I'M GOING TO APPROPRIATE DR. SCOTTSDALE'S BEDROOM.

I WATCHED HER WALK UP THE STAIRS AND THAT WAS THE LAST TIME I SAW HER BEFORE SHE DISAPPEARED.

THE NEXT MORNING SHE WAS GONE.

WE READ ABOUT
HER EXPLOITS IN
THE NEWS, AND
FOUR YEARS LATER,
WE SAW HER ON
TELEVISION.

BEHIND ME
IS THE WHITE HOUSE.
WHERE NEWLY APPOINTED
SECRETARY OF HOMELAND
SECURITY, FORMER US ATTORNEY
GENERAL NICK PENNINGTON IS
IN CONFERENCE WITH THE
PRESIDENT.

HERE WE
SEE NICK PENNINGTON
HIMSELF WITH HIS LOVELY
FIANCE, APEP NEPHTHYS, OUTSIDE
A BENEFIT GALA HELD LAST WEEK.
AS YOU ALREADY KNOW PENNINGTON
WAS APPOINTED AFTER THE
MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF HIS
PREDECESSOR.

NATIONAL POLITICAL NEWS
NEW SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY, NICK PENNINGTON, WITH
BEAUTIFUL FIANCE APEP NEPHTHYS AT BENEFIT GALA

SHE'S BEEN
MARRIED THREE
TIMES IN THE LAST FOUR
YEARS, TWO HUSBANDS MYSTER-
IOUSLY DIE AND ONE COMMITTED
TO AN INSTITUTION, ALL
LEAVING THEIR FORTUNES
TO HER.

MOST
DEFINITELY NOT A
COINCIDENCE.

AMASSING
THIS GREAT WEALTH,
BUT TO WHAT
END?

WITH HER
NEW INVOLVEMENT
WITH THIS NICK PENNING-
TON PERSON, OBVIOUSLY
SOMETHING THAT MAY
THREATEN THE
FREE WORLD.

IT'S
JUST HARD
TO THINK
THAT I...

DON'T
BLAME YOURSELF
YOU HAD NO IDEA
THIS WOULD HAPPEN.
IT'S ALMOST TOO
UNBELI...

I'LL GO
GET THE
DOOR.

APEP!

YOU
KNOW I
HAVE.
I...

...WHAT
ABOUT YOUR
FIANCE?

NICK?
WE'RE GOING
FOR A CONFERENCE IN
IRAQ TO MEET WITH THE
PRIME MINISTER. MORE
TALK ON THE NEW
DEMOCRACY.

FUNNY
WORD IN A WORLD
LIKE THIS, ISN'T IT?
PEACE IS NOT IN HUMAN
NATURE. I WENT ON AHEAD.
HE WILL CALL FOR
ME HERE IN THE
MORNING.

THAT'S NOT
WHAT I MEANT. ARE
YOU IN LOVE WITH HIM?
DID YOU EVEN FEEL
FOR ANY OF THE
OTHERS?

BEFORE
YOU DESTROYED
THEM?

IF I WANTED
LOVE I WOULD
COME TO YOU, HAND-
SOME. DON'T LOOK SO
BASHFUL. HOW COULD I
NOT NOTICE THE
WAY YOU LOOK
AT ME?

HELLO
HANDSOME,
CAN I COME
IN?

OF
COURSE,
COME
IN.

DID
YOU MISS
ME?

GODDESS?
IS THAT WHAT
YOU ARE?

THEN
WHAT IS
IT? THE
MONEY?

MONEY?

WHAT'S
A GODDESS
NEED WITH
MONEY?

THAT'S WHAT
YOU MADE ME. I'M
THE MOST POWERFUL WOMAN
IN THE WORLD THANKS TO YOU
AND DR SCOTTSDALE. I NOW DICTATE
LIFE AND DEATH. I HAVE POWERS
BEYOND NORMAL MAN. IS THAT
NOT WHAT MAKES
A GODDESS?

NICK
PENNINGTON. HE
IS SUPPOSED TO BE
SOMEONE SO IMPORTANT. IN
CHARGE OF KEEPING AMERICA
SAFE. BUT TO ME HE IS ONLY A
PUPPET AND I PULL THE STRINGS.
WITH HIM I'LL HOLD THE FATE
OF THE WORLD IN MY
HANDS.

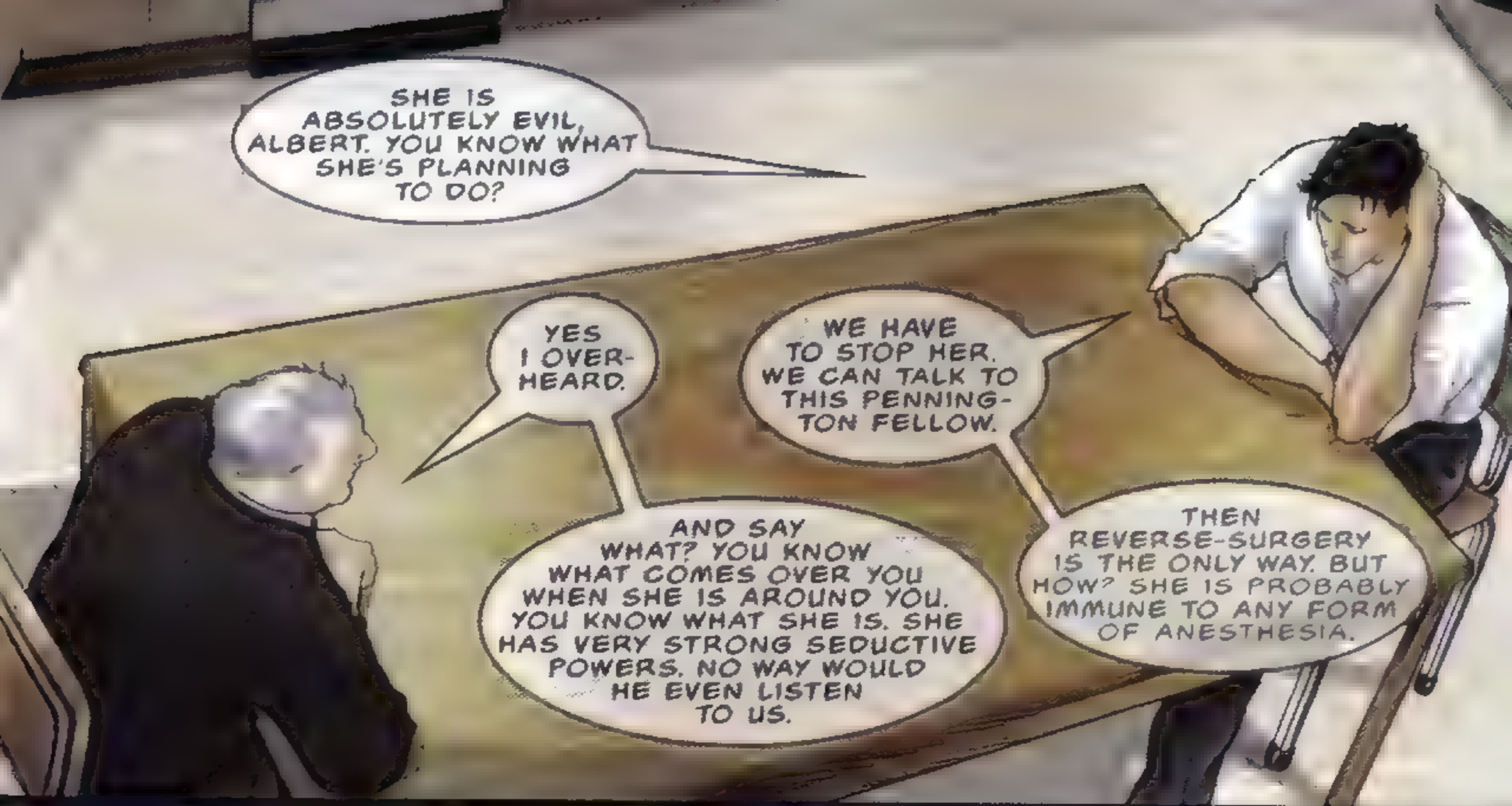
IS THAT
WHAT YOU ARE
AFTER? THE
WORLD?

IS IT NOT
WHAT A GODDESS
IS MEANT FOR? THE
WORLD WILL BOW DOWN
TO ME. WILL YOU RULE
AT MY SIDE, HAND-
SOME?

APEP,
YOU'RE
EVIL.

EVIL? TOO
BAD YOU HADN'T
REALIZED THAT WHEN
YOU DECIDED TO HELP DR.
SCOTTSDALE, APEP, IN MY NATIVE
LANGUAGE, IS THE VERY PERSONI-
FICATION OF EVIL. MY MOTHER
KNEW IT THE DAY HER EYES
FIRST MET MINE. SHE NAMED ME
AT THAT VERY MOMENT WHEN
SHE WHISPERED THE
WORD APEP.

ANYWAY
NICK WILL COME FOR
ME IN THE MORNING. I
NEED TO REST UNTIL THEN. I'M
GOING TO DR. SCOTTSDALE'S
ROOM FOR THE NIGHT. MY
OFFER STILL STANDS,
HANDSOME.



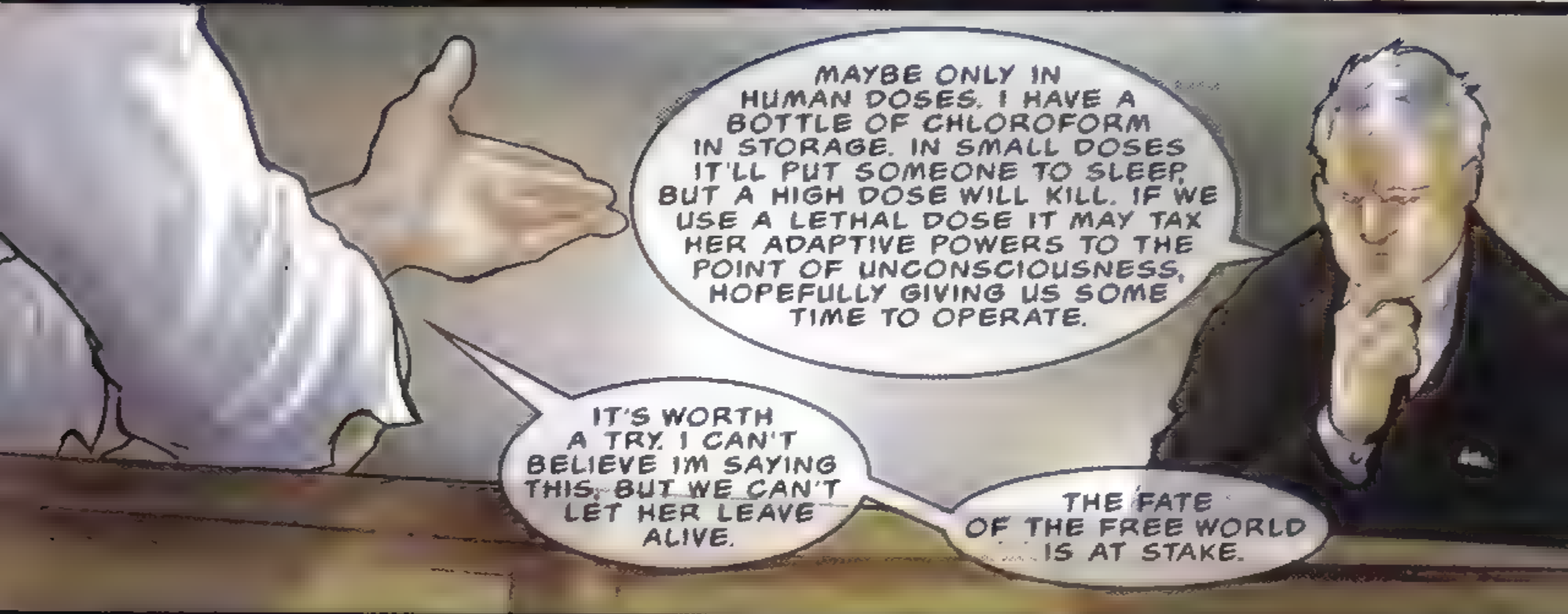
SHE IS
ABSOLUTELY EVIL,
ALBERT. YOU KNOW WHAT
SHE'S PLANNING
TO DO?

YES
I OVER-
HEARD.

WE HAVE
TO STOP HER.
WE CAN TALK TO
THIS PENNING-
TON FELLOW.

AND SAY
WHAT? YOU KNOW
WHAT COMES OVER YOU
WHEN SHE IS AROUND YOU.
YOU KNOW WHAT SHE IS. SHE
HAS VERY STRONG SEDUCTIVE
POWERS. NO WAY WOULD
HE EVEN LISTEN
TO US.


THEN
REVERSE-SURGERY
IS THE ONLY WAY. BUT
HOW? SHE IS PROBABLY
IMMUNE TO ANY FORM
OF ANESTHESIA.



MAYBE ONLY IN
HUMAN DOSES. I HAVE A
BOTTLE OF CHLOROFORM
IN STORAGE. IN SMALL DOSES
IT'LL PUT SOMEONE TO SLEEP,
BUT A HIGH DOSE WILL KILL. IF WE
USE A LETHAL DOSE IT MAY TAX
HER ADAPTIVE POWERS TO THE
POINT OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS,
HOPEFULLY GIVING US SOME
TIME TO OPERATE.

IT'S WORTH
A TRY. I CAN'T
BELIEVE I'M SAYING
THIS, BUT WE CAN'T
LET HER LEAVE
ALIVE.

THE FATE
OF THE FREE WORLD
IS AT STAKE.



OKAY,
NOW PUT IT
OVER HER FACE. I'LL
HELP HOLD HER
DOWN.

AT THAT
DOSAGE, IT SHOULD
ONLY TAKE A FEW
MOMENTS TO TAKE
EFFECT.





YOU
THINK YOU
CAN KNOCK
ME UNCON-
SCIOUS!?!

WAIT,
YOU WERE
GOING TO
OPERATE
ON ME.

I SHOULD
KILL YOU BOTH
WHERE YOU
STAND!

BUT I
WILL NOT
LOWER MYSELF
TO YOUR PATHETIC
LEVEL.



WELL
LOOK.

THERE!
YOU
SEE!?!

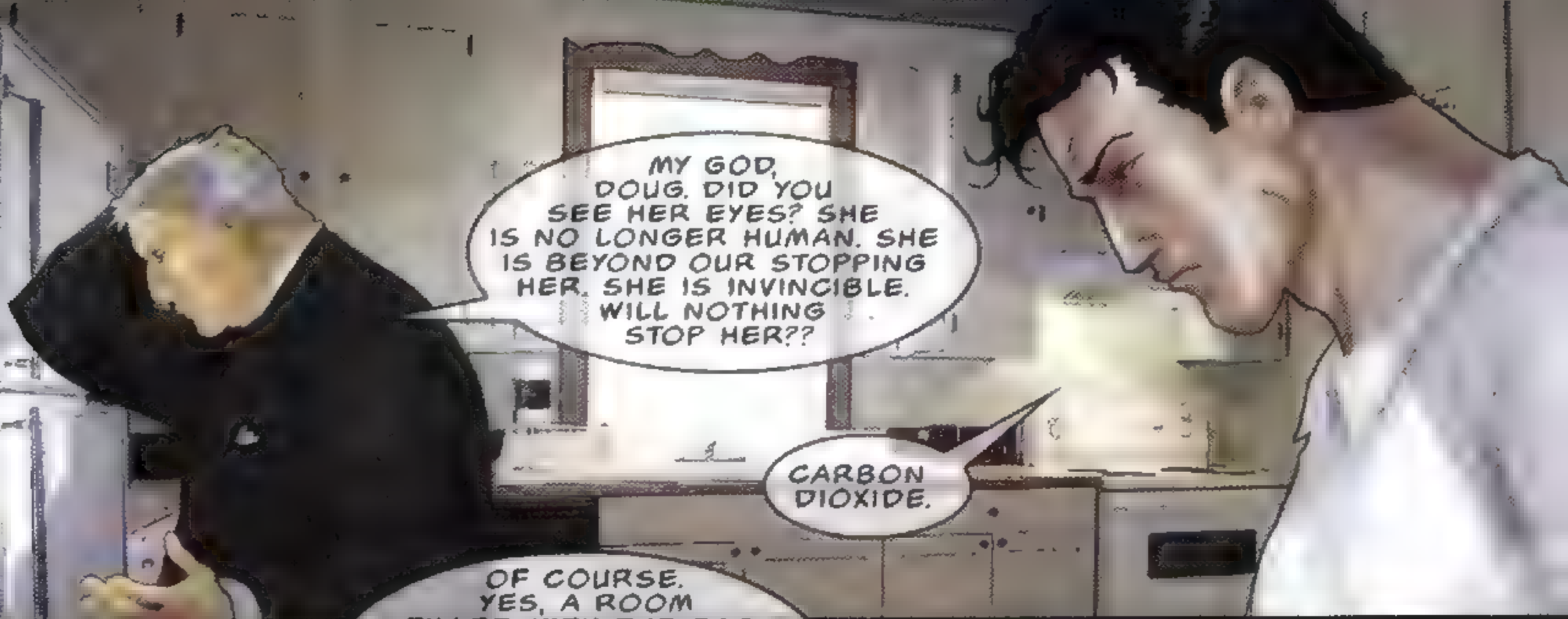
WATCH
HOW YOUR
FUTILE ATTEMPT
WOULD HAVE
FAILED.

NOW
GET OUT! LEAVE
ME TO MY SLUMBER.
NICK WILL BE CALLING
FOR ME IN THE
MORNING.

IS THIS
WHAT YOU'RE
LOOKING FOR,
DOCTOR?

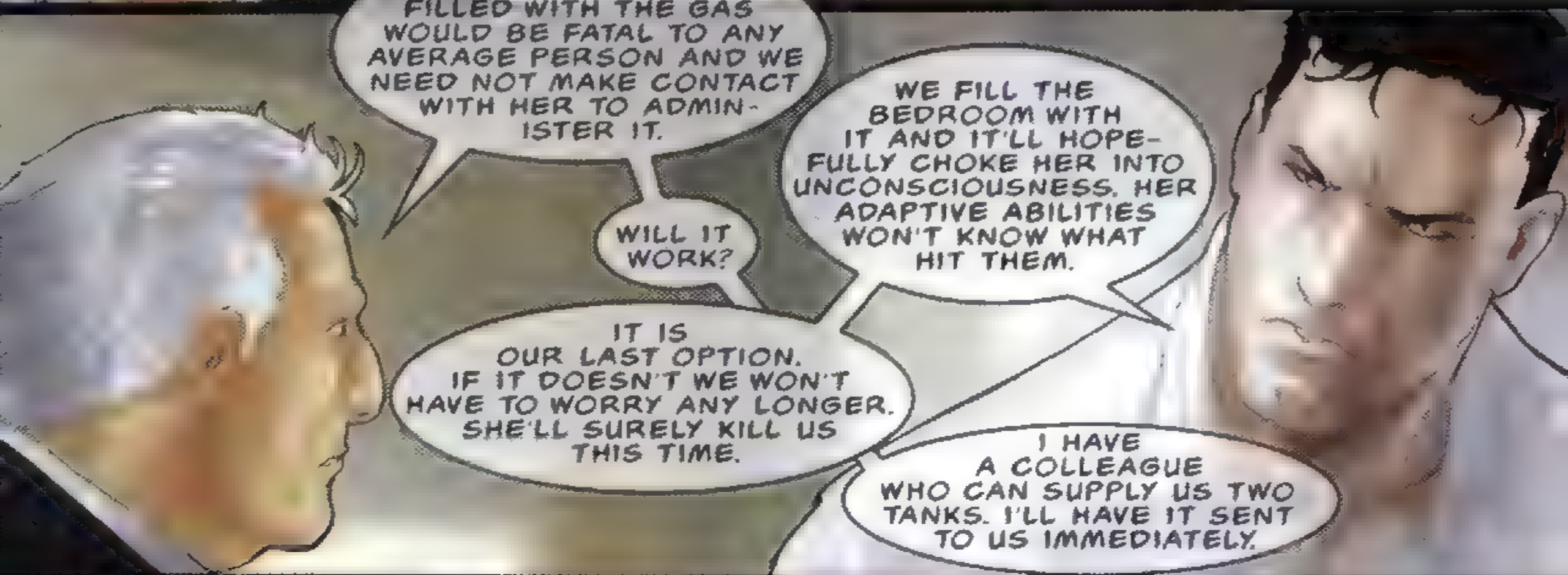
WAS
THIS PLAN
'B'?

WERE
YOU GOING
TO SLIT MY
THROAT
WITH IT?



MY GOD, DOUG. DID YOU SEE HER EYES? SHE IS NO LONGER HUMAN. SHE IS BEYOND OUR STOPPING HER. SHE IS INVINCIBLE. WILL NOTHING STOP HER??

CARBON DIOXIDE.



OF COURSE. YES, A ROOM FILLED WITH THE GAS WOULD BE FATAL TO ANY AVERAGE PERSON AND WE NEED NOT MAKE CONTACT WITH HER TO ADMINISTER IT.

WILL IT WORK?

WE FILL THE BEDROOM WITH IT AND IT'LL HOPEFULLY CHOKE HER INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS. HER ADAPTIVE ABILITIES WON'T KNOW WHAT HIT THEM.

IT IS OUR LAST OPTION. IF IT DOESN'T WE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ANY LONGER. SHE'LL SURELY KILL US THIS TIME.

I HAVE A COLLEAGUE WHO CAN SUPPLY US TWO TANKS. I'LL HAVE IT SENT TO US IMMEDIATELY.

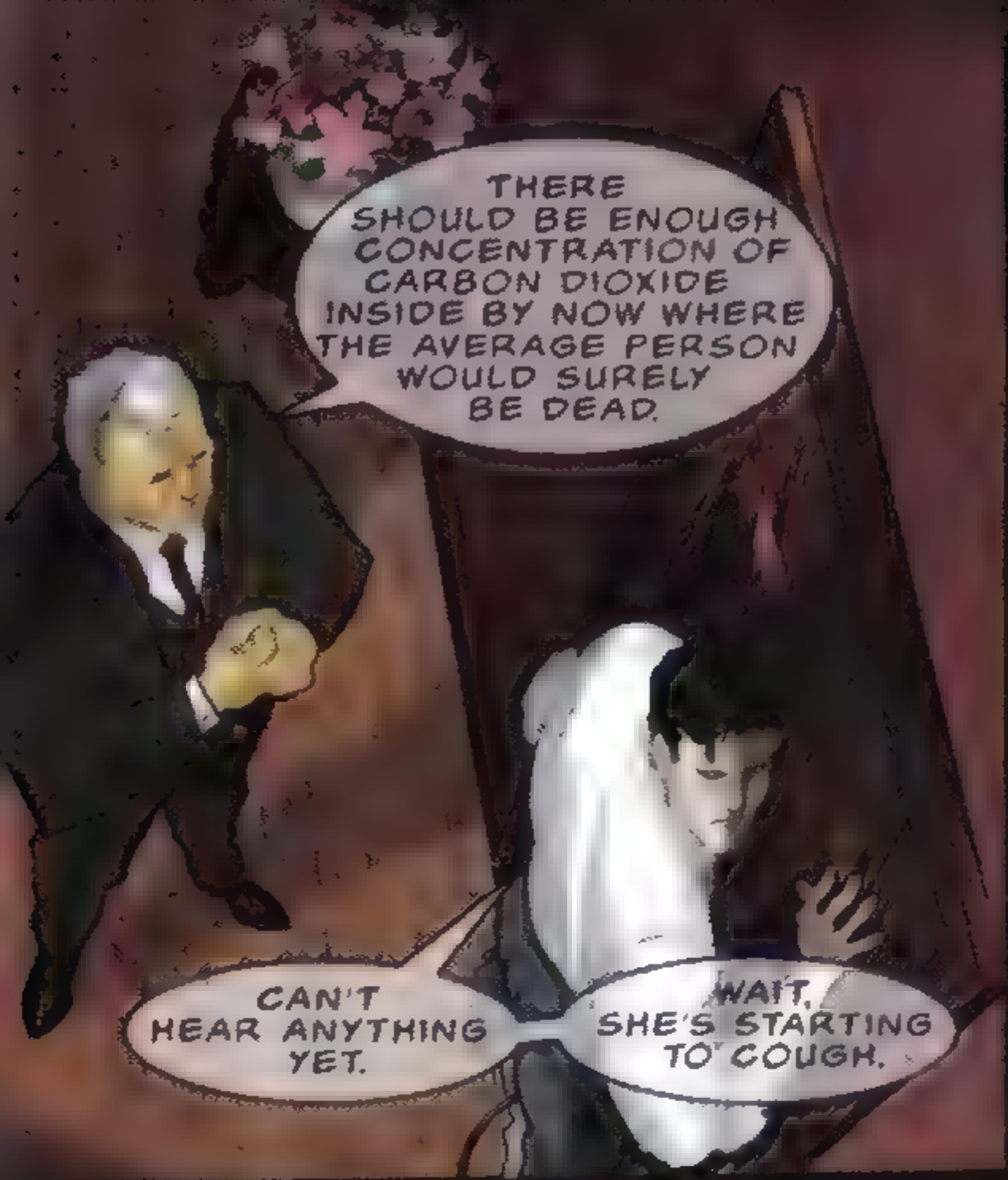


OKAY. THE DOOR CRACK AND THE VENTS INSIDE ARE SEALED...

...AND WITH CAULKING AROUND THE OUTSIDE OF THE WINDOW...

...THE ROOM'S AS AIRTIGHT AS IT'S GOING TO GET.

ANY MOMENT NOW, DOUG, THE GAS SHOULD BE FILLING THE ROOM AND SOON START TAKING EFFECT ON APER.



THERE SHOULD BE ENOUGH CONCENTRATION OF CARBON DIOXIDE INSIDE BY NOW WHERE THE AVERAGE PERSON WOULD SURELY BE DEAD.

CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING YET.

WAIT, SHE'S STARTING TO COUGH.



SHE IS COUGHING HEAVILY NOW. I CAN HEAR HER STRUGGLING TO GET OUT OF BED. I CAN HEAR THE LAMP AND CLOCK FALL TO THE FLOOR.

HEAVY FOOTSTEPS AS SHE STRUGGLES TO STAY UPRIGHT. AS SHE COMES CLOSER TO THE DOOR.

THUMP

GOOD LORD, SHE'S AT THE DOOR. IS THERE NO STOPPING HER?



DOUG, PLEASE. DON'T KILL ME.

KOFF PLEASE, I'M NOT KOFF REALLY EVIL, JUST A KOFF CONFUSED KOFF CHILD KOFF

I..

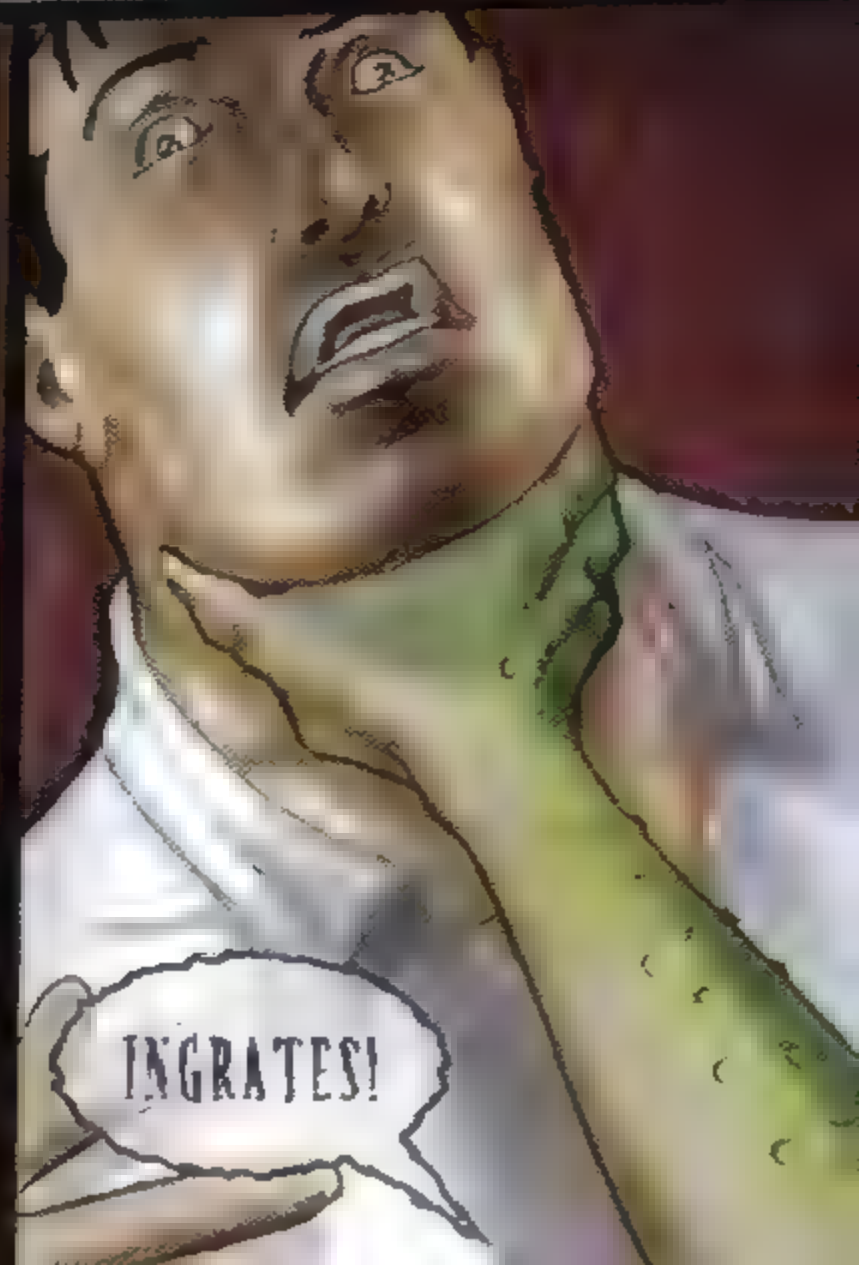
DO NOT LISTEN TO HER, DOUG. FIGHT OFF HER INFLUENCE.

DOUG KOFF I LOVE YOU PLEASE. KOFF

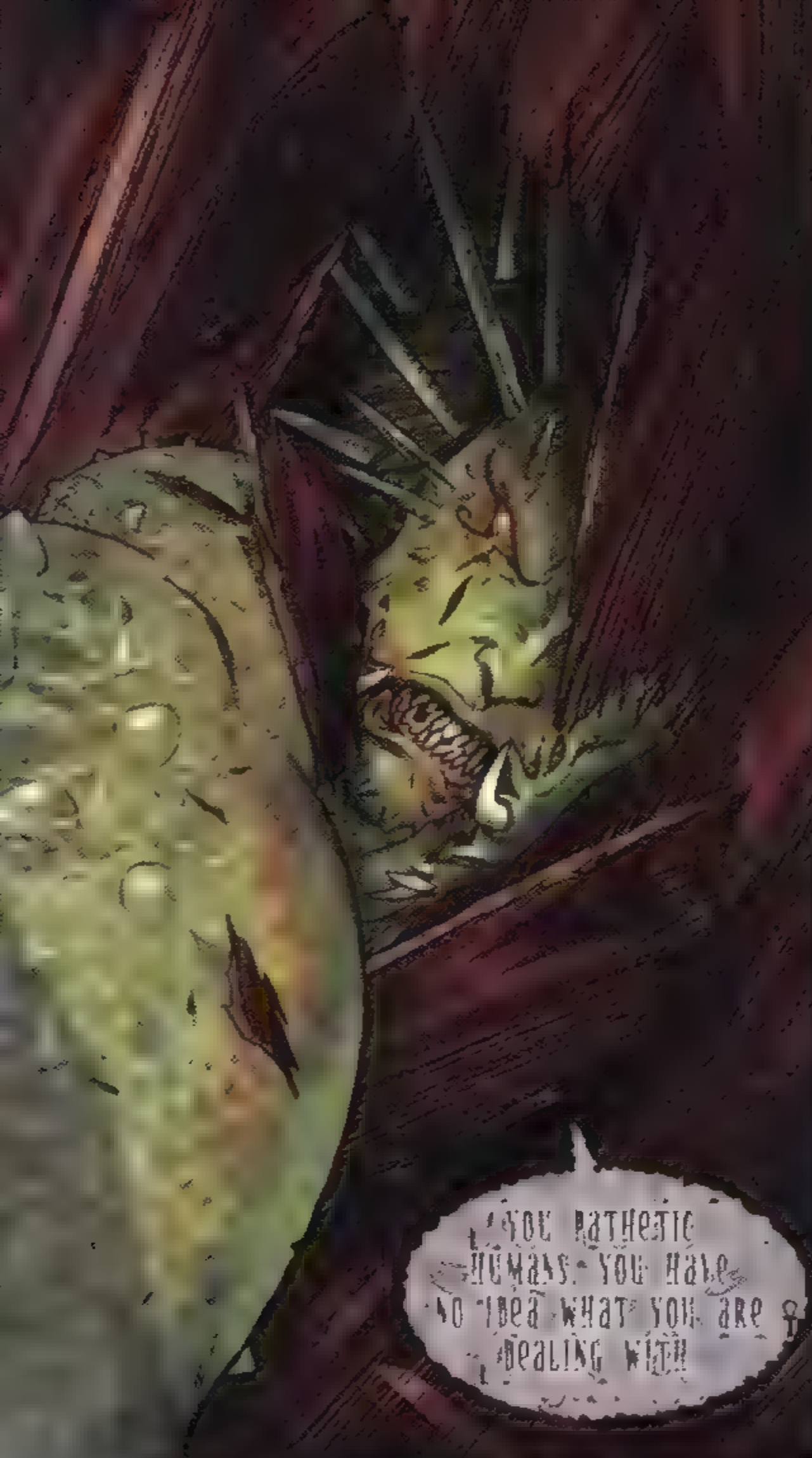


KOFF IF YOU LOVE ME, KOFF PLEASE SAVE ME KOFF

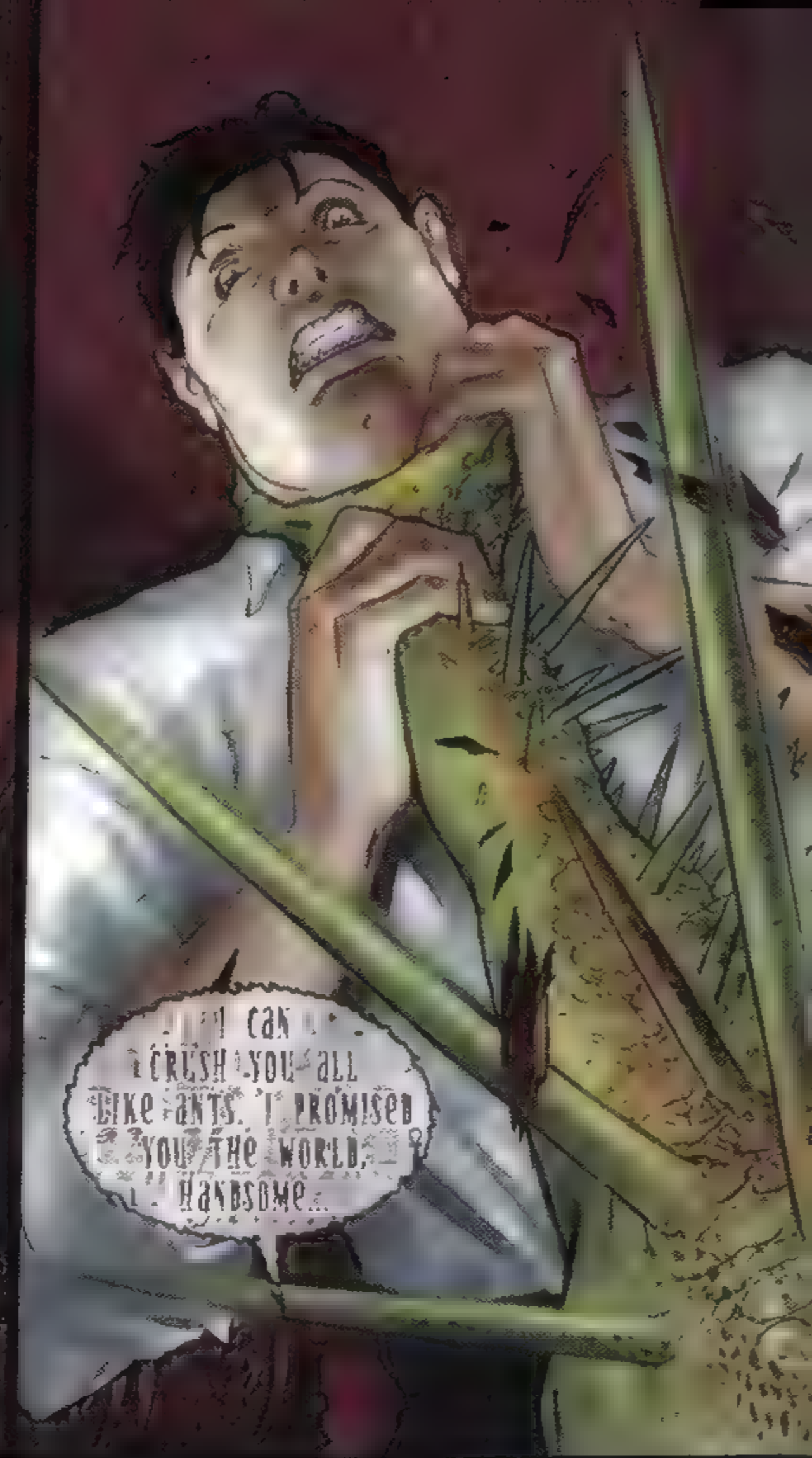
NO!!! I WON'T LISTEN!



INGRATES!



YOU PATHETIC HUMANS. YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH



I CAN CRUSH YOU ALL LIKE ANTS. I PROMISED YOU THE WORLD. I'M HANDSOME...



AND THIS IS HOW... YOU... R RE PA...



DOUG, QUICK! WE HAVE TO SHUT OFF THE CARBON DIOXIDE BEFORE IT OVERTAKES US AS WELL.

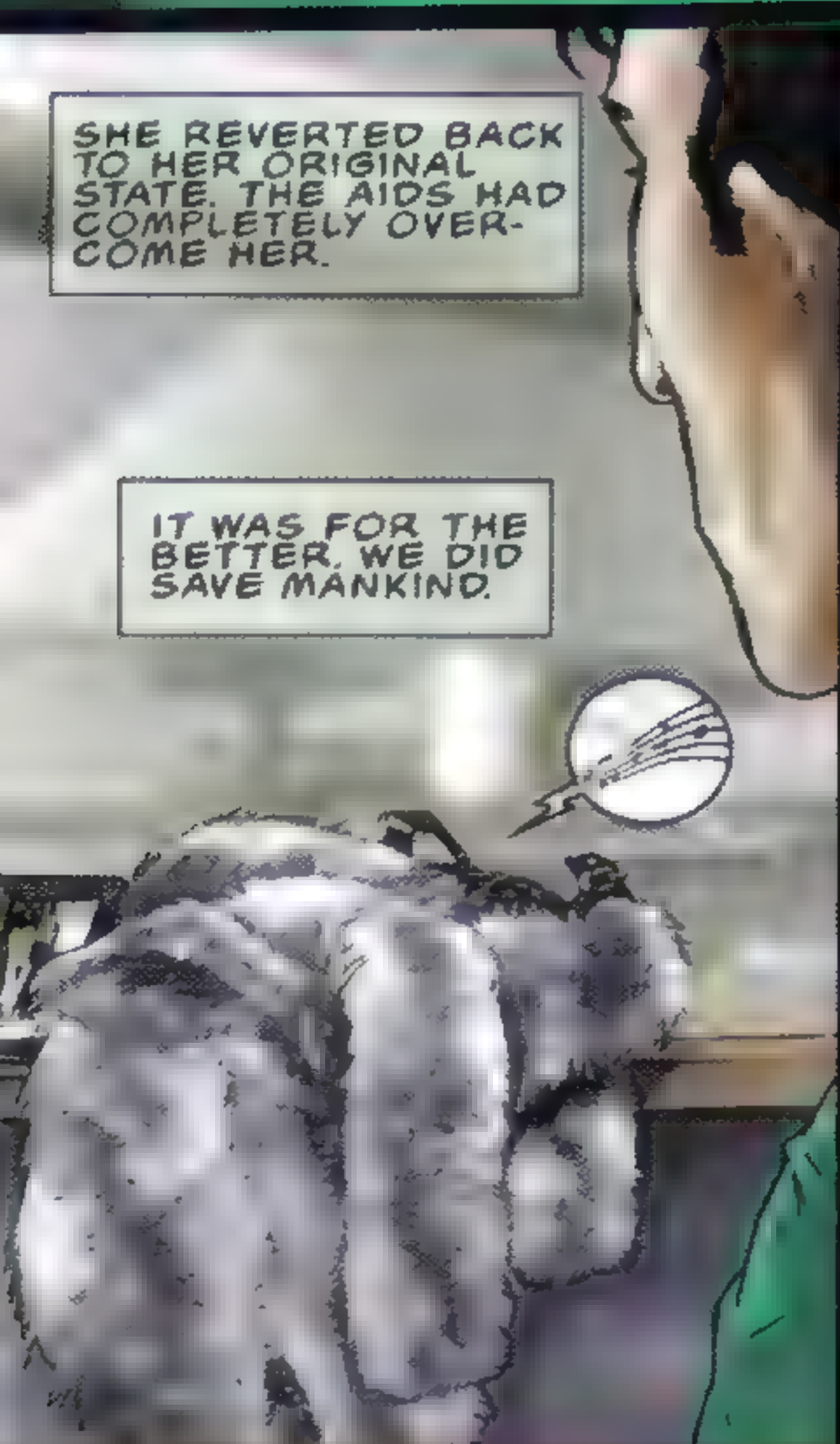
NO, NOT UNTIL WE OPERATE.

THERE, IT'S OFF IT'S OVER NOW.



THIS IS HOW THE STORY ENDS.

WE WERE ABLE TO DO THE PROCEDURE WITHOUT INCIDENT.



SHE REVERTED BACK TO HER ORIGINAL STATE. THE AIDS HAD COMPLETELY OVERCOME HER.

IT WAS FOR THE BETTER. WE DID SAVE MANKIND.



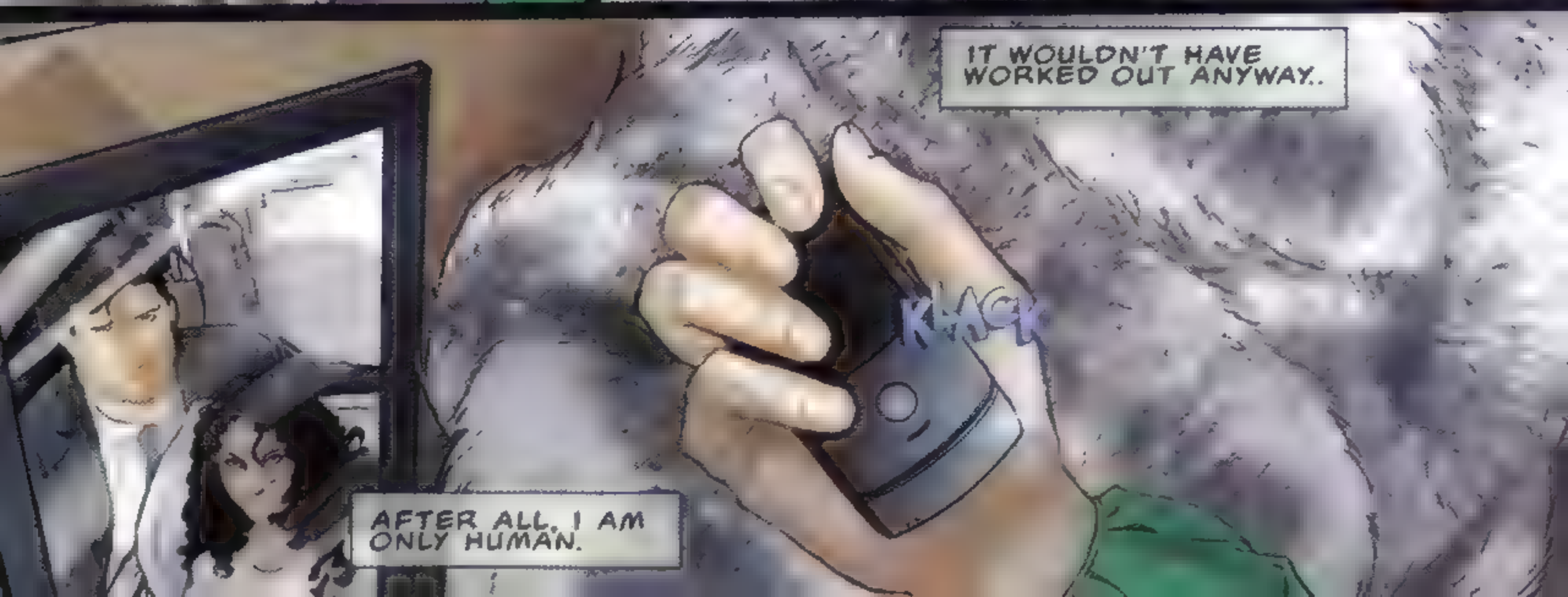
THEN WHY DID I FEEL SO BAD?

WELL, SHE WAS RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING.



I WAS IN LOVE WITH HER, AND MAYBE IN HER OWN TWISTED WAY SHE LOVED ME.

I ALMOST TOOK HER UP ON HER OFFER TO RULE BY HER SIDE



IT WOULDN'T HAVE WORKED OUT ANYWAY.

AFTER ALL, I AM ONLY HUMAN.



HA! SEE WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN A GAL TRUSTS
THE WRONG
TWO GUYS!?



BUT STILL
--THAT
TALE TRULY
INSPIRED
ME!



FOLKS ARE ALWAYS SCHEMIN' TO HOLD OTHERS
DOWN! LET ME TELL YOU, EVEN THE CRYPT-KEEPER
AND THE VAULT-KEEPER ARE PART OF A GHOUL-
OLD BOYS CLUB THAT LOVES KEEPING A GOOD
WOMAN DOWN! AFTER ALL, THEY'VE GOT
CRYPTS AND VAULTS TO KEEP -
WHAT DO I HAVE?!

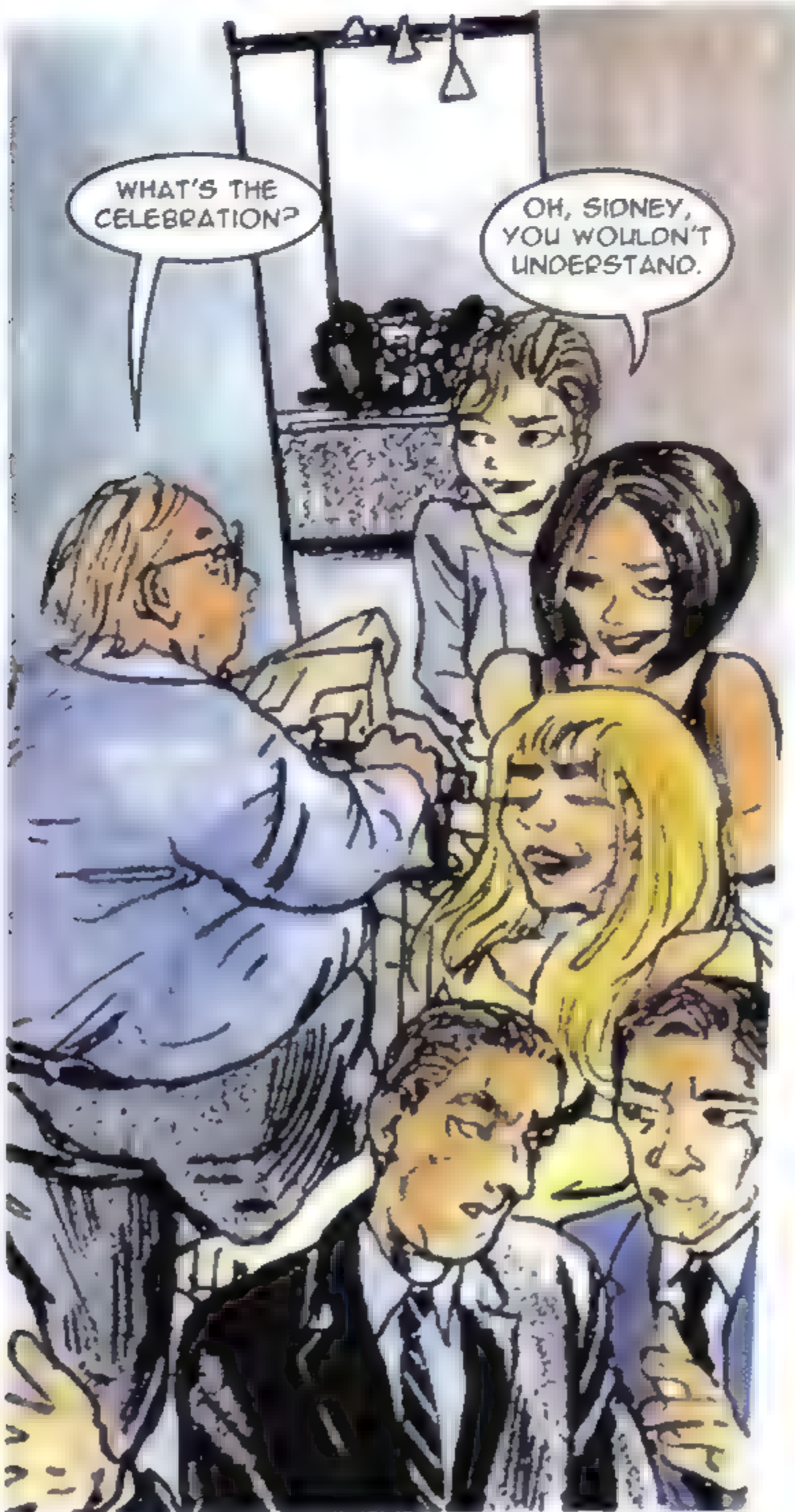
I NEED TO
WHIP UP A BATCH OF
OL' DOC SCOTTSDALE'S
SPECIAL POTION! BUT I'LL
NEED TWO SPECIAL
INGREDIENTS!

BUT POWER-HUNGRY
PREDATORS DON'T JUST PREY UPON
WOMEN! ANYONE THEY DEEM TO BE WEAK IS FAIR
GAME! TAKE STANLEY POTTS, FOR EXAMPLE! ALL HE
HAD WAS A SIMPLE
DREAM, AND AN
OPPORTUNISTIC CO-
WORKER STOLE IT!
IT'S ALL LOVINGLY
LAID OUT IN...

**VIRTUAL
HOO DOO**



CONGRATULATIONS, BART. WHAT A GREAT IDEA!



WHAT'S THE CELEBRATION?

OH, SIDNEY, YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.



HE SOLD A FANTASTIC GAME IDEA FOR THE COMPANY

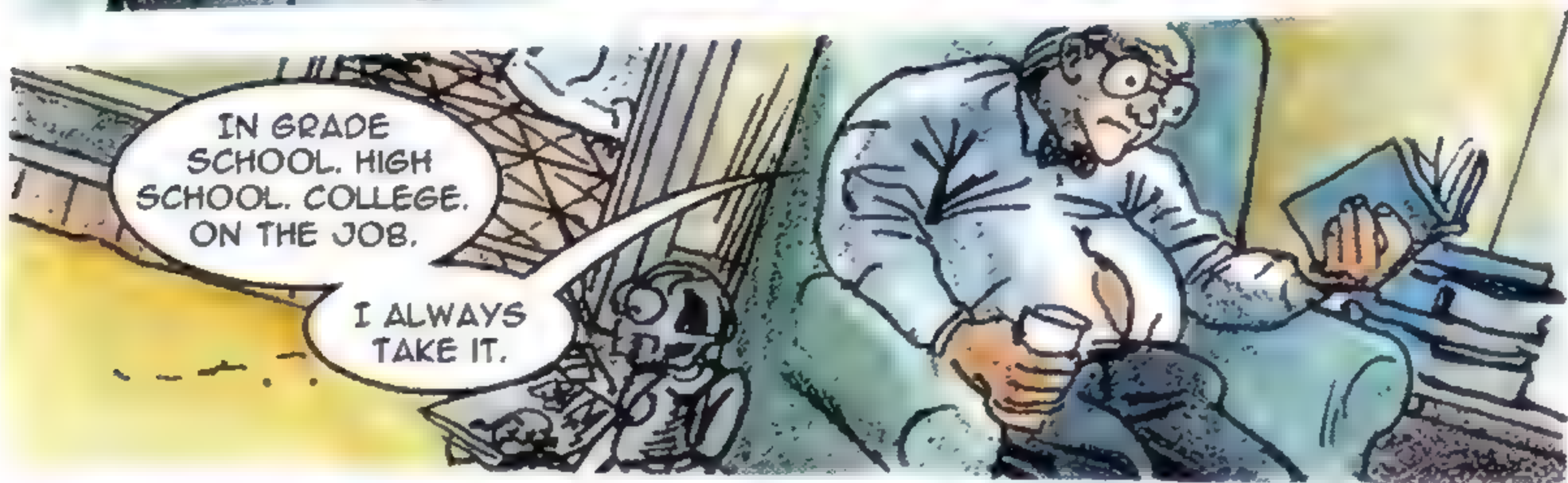
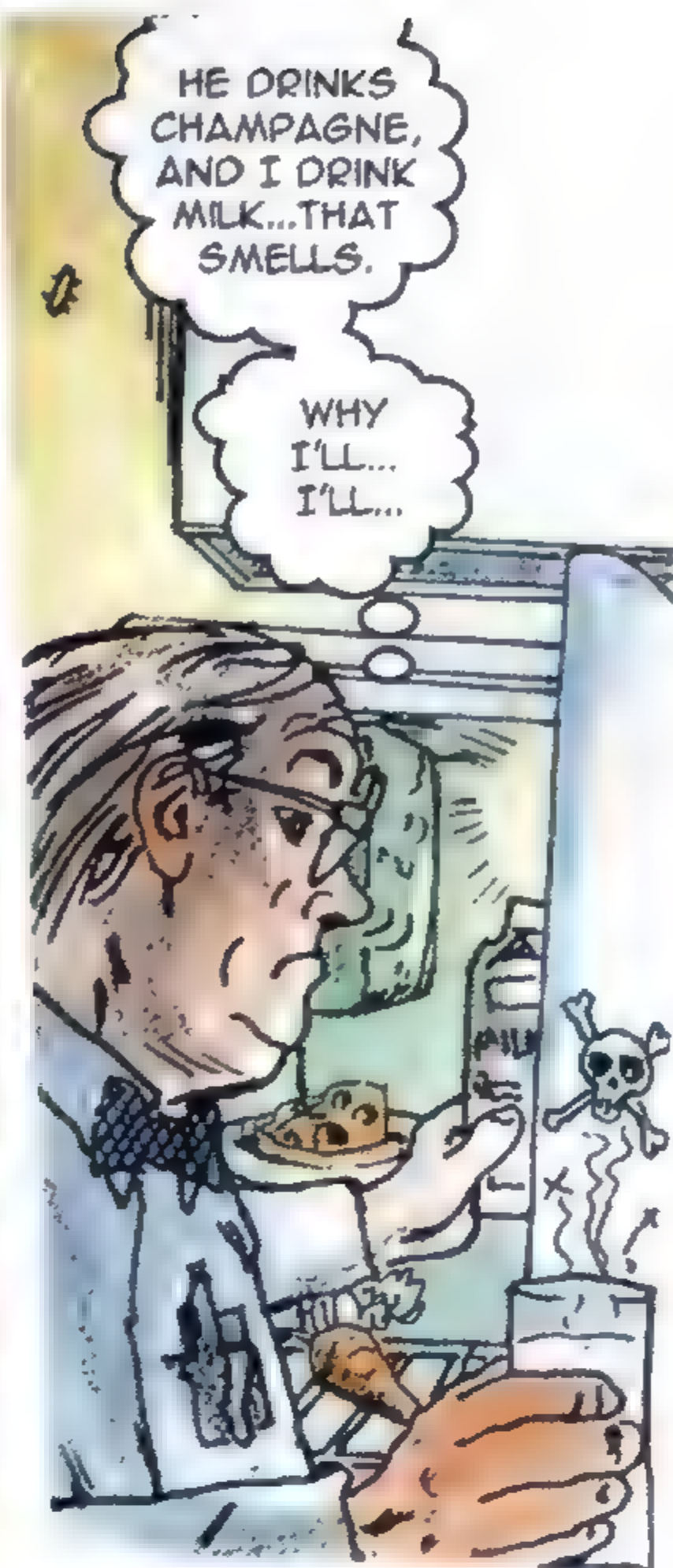
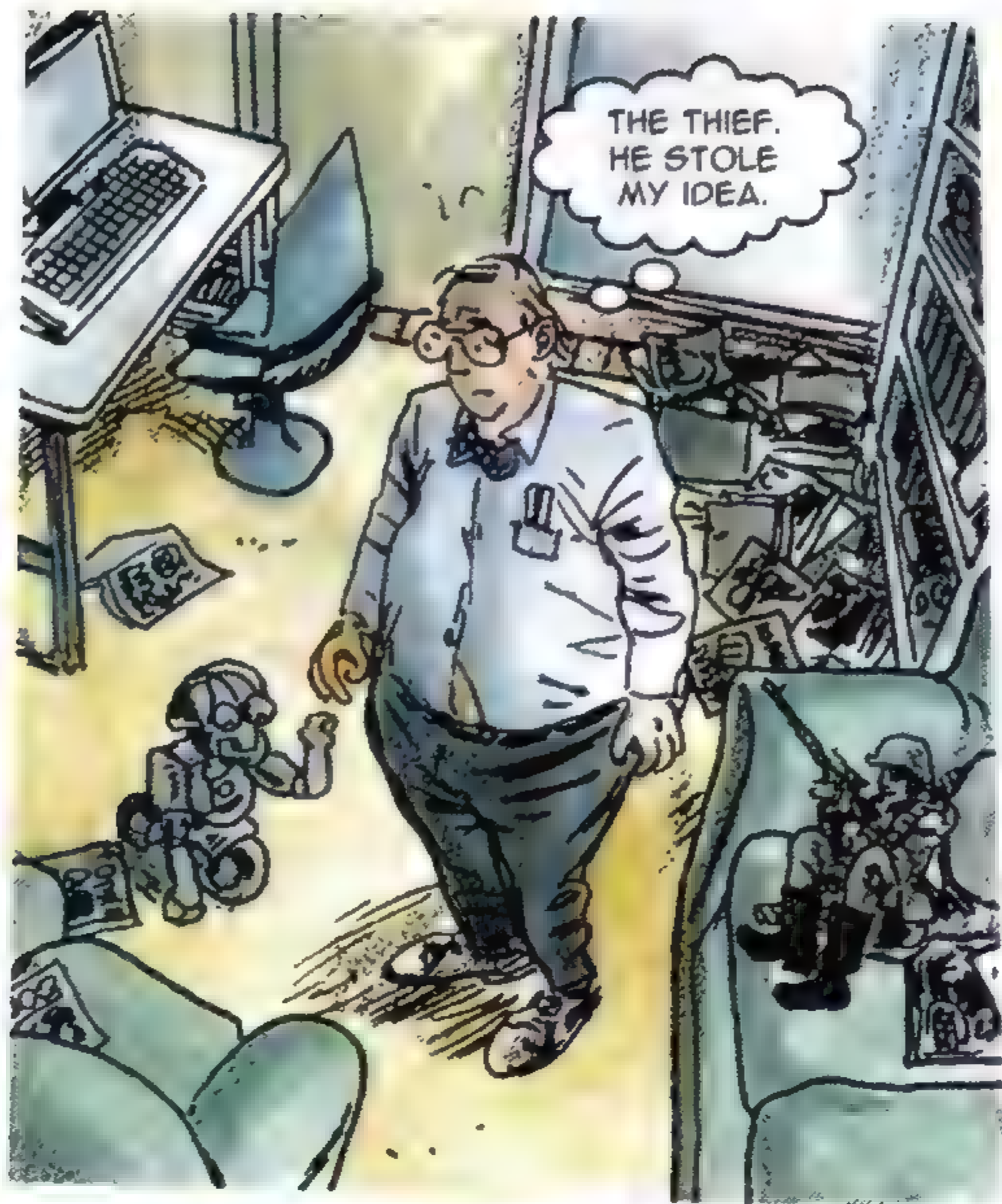
IT'S CALLED MONSTER NEIGHBORHOOD.

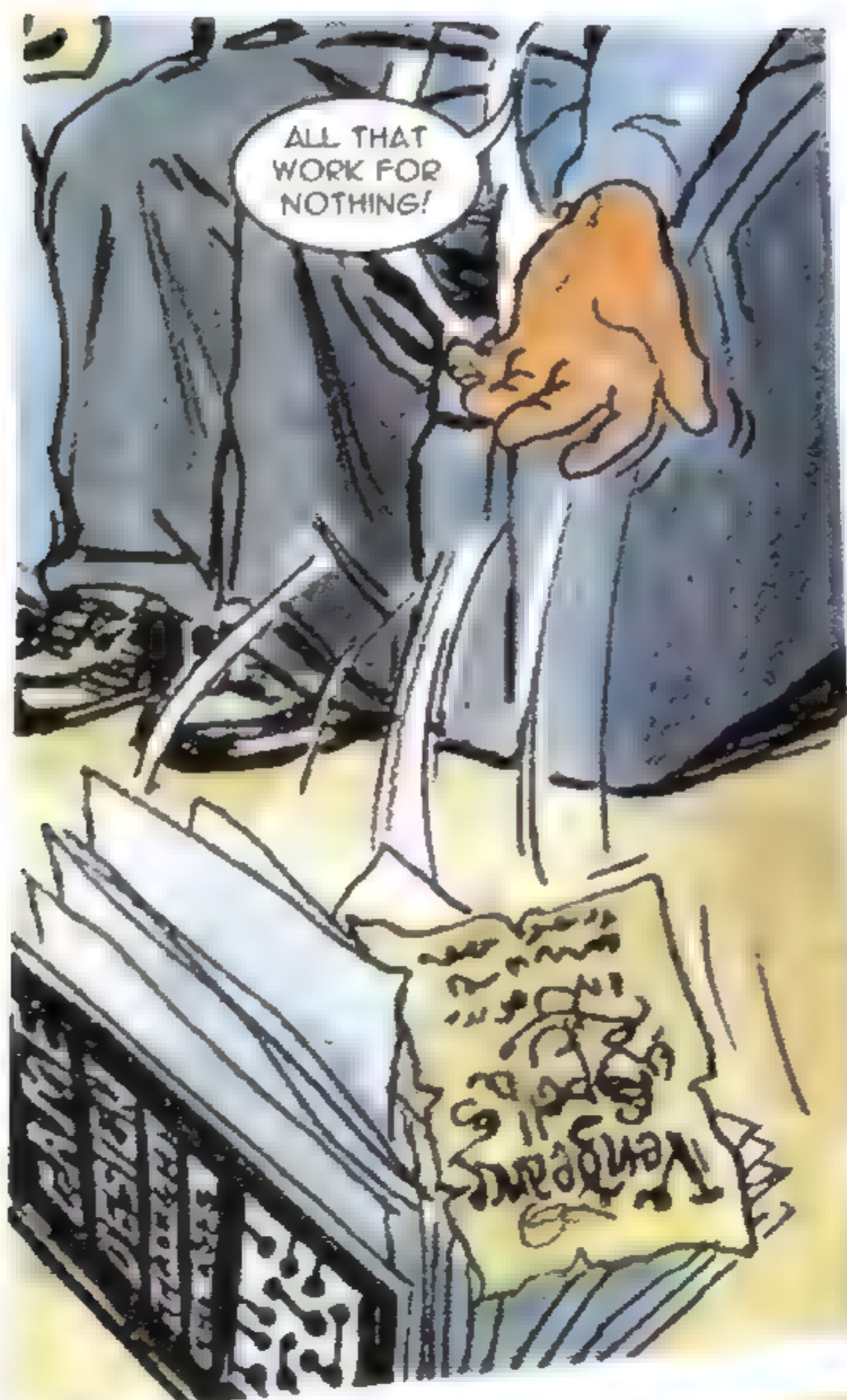
WHAT'S THAT'S MY GAME

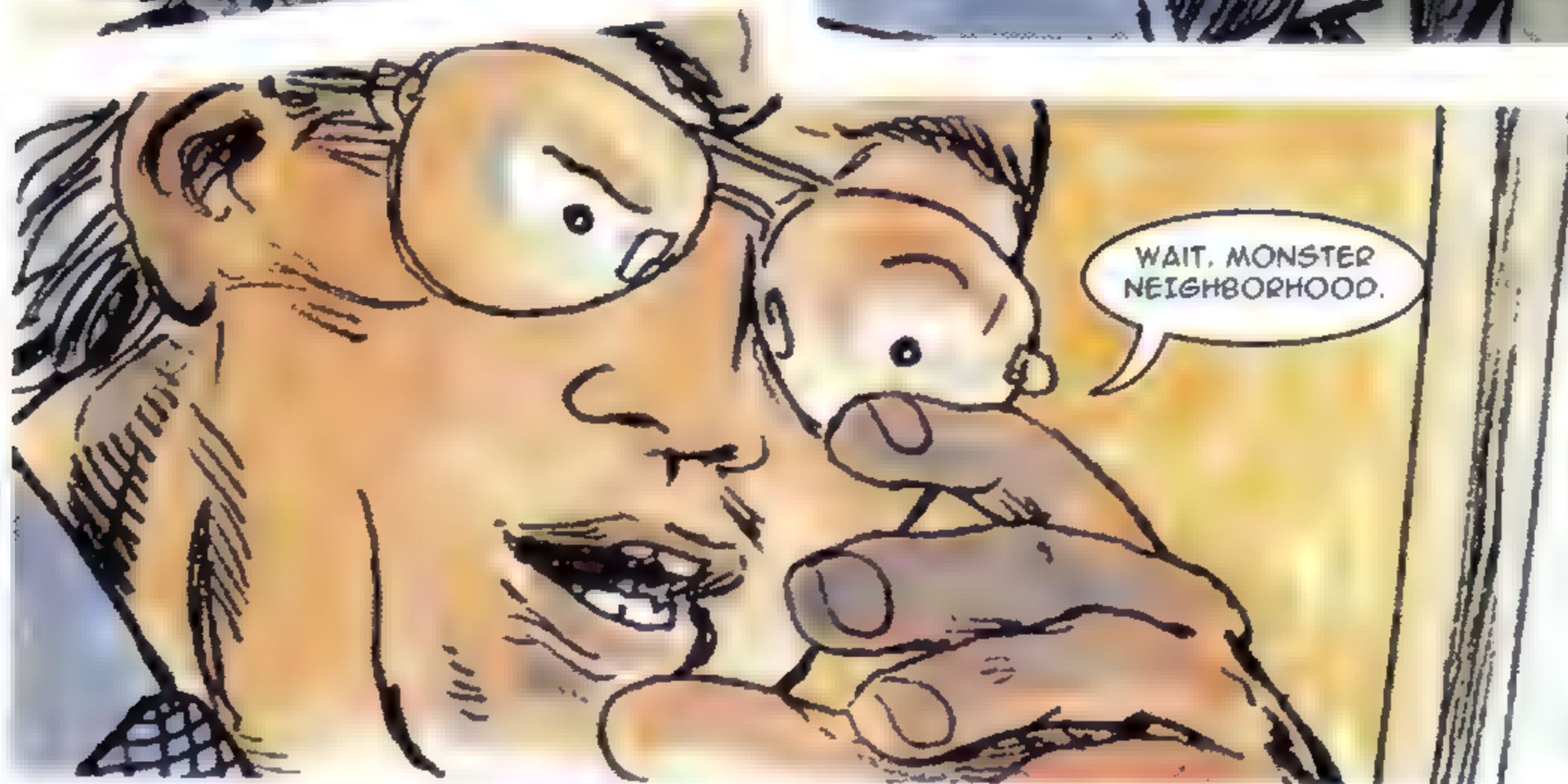


DON'T BE RIDICULOUS. YOU WORK IN THE MAIL ROOM. HE'S THE GENIUS.









MONSTER neighborhood

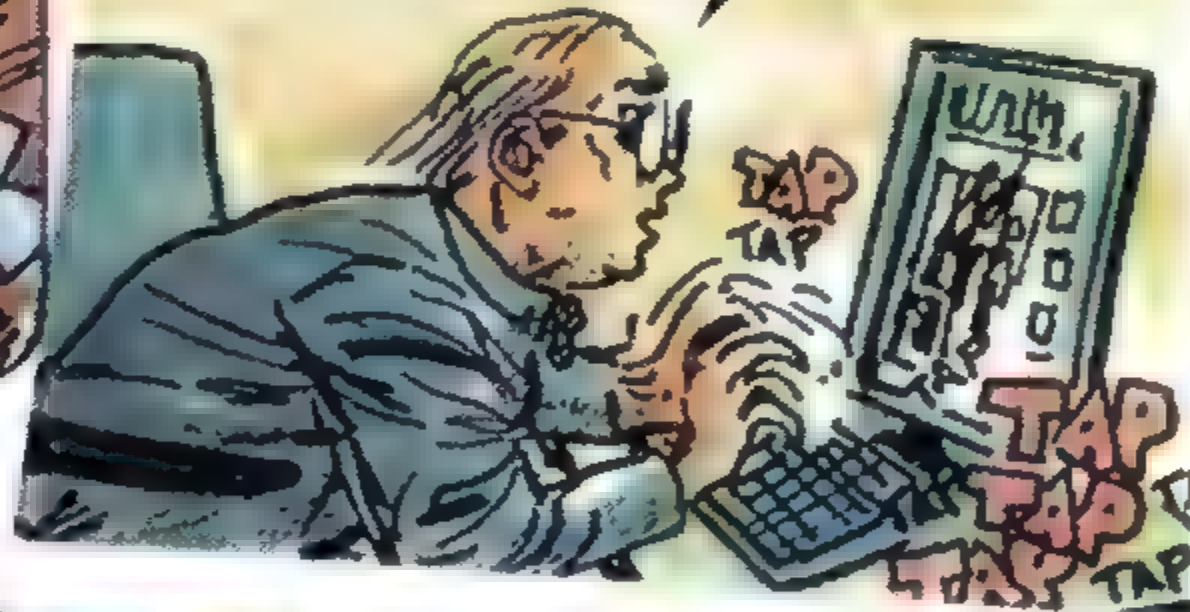


WHAT THE HELL. I'LL GIVE IT A SPIN.

I'LL USE HER. BLOODY CROCKER.

I'LL JUST GIVE THE SPELL TO HER TO DELIVER.

YOU GOT THAT, BLOODY?



I HEAR YOU, MASTER. AND I WILL DELIVER YOUR MESSAGE..

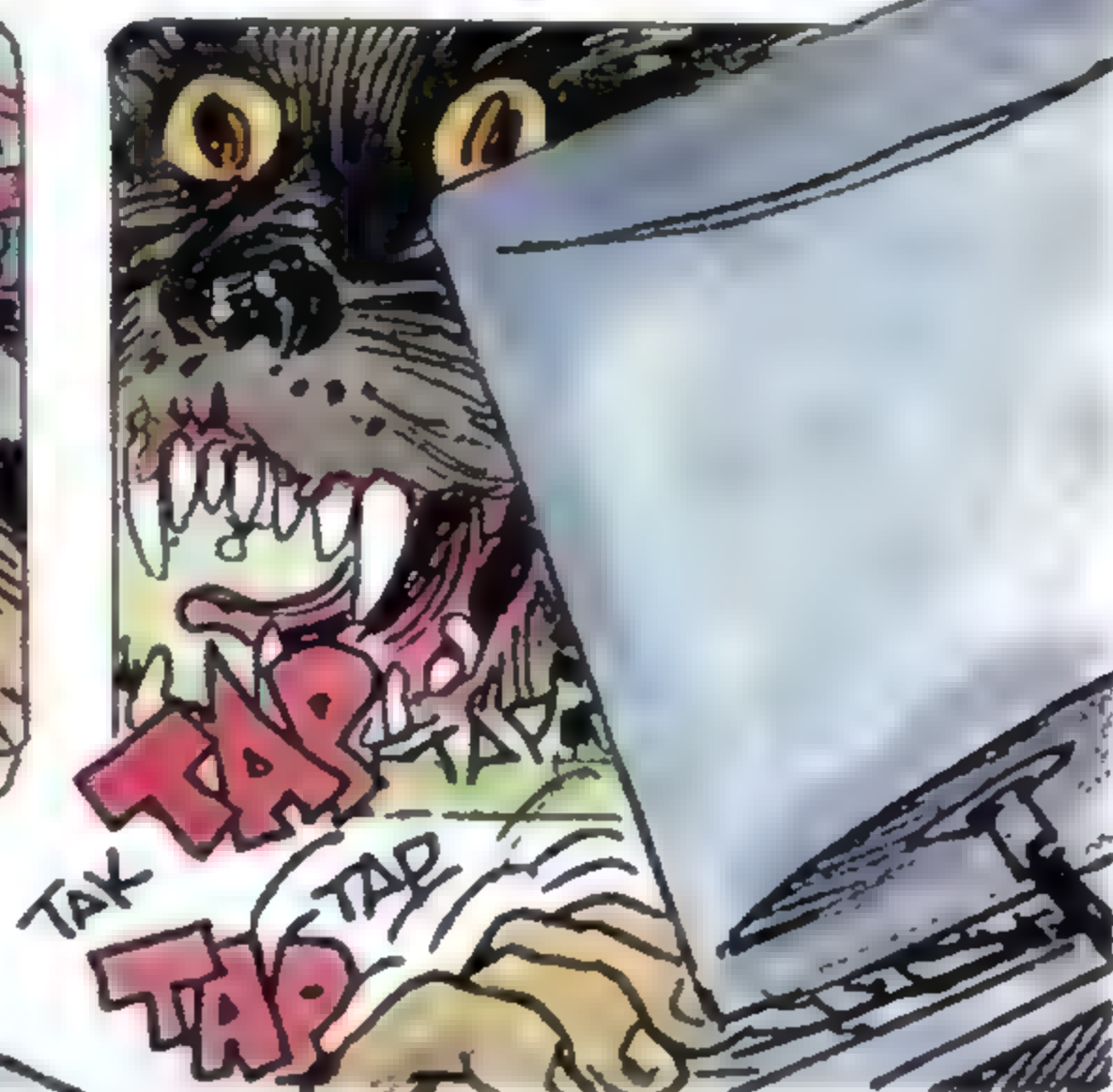
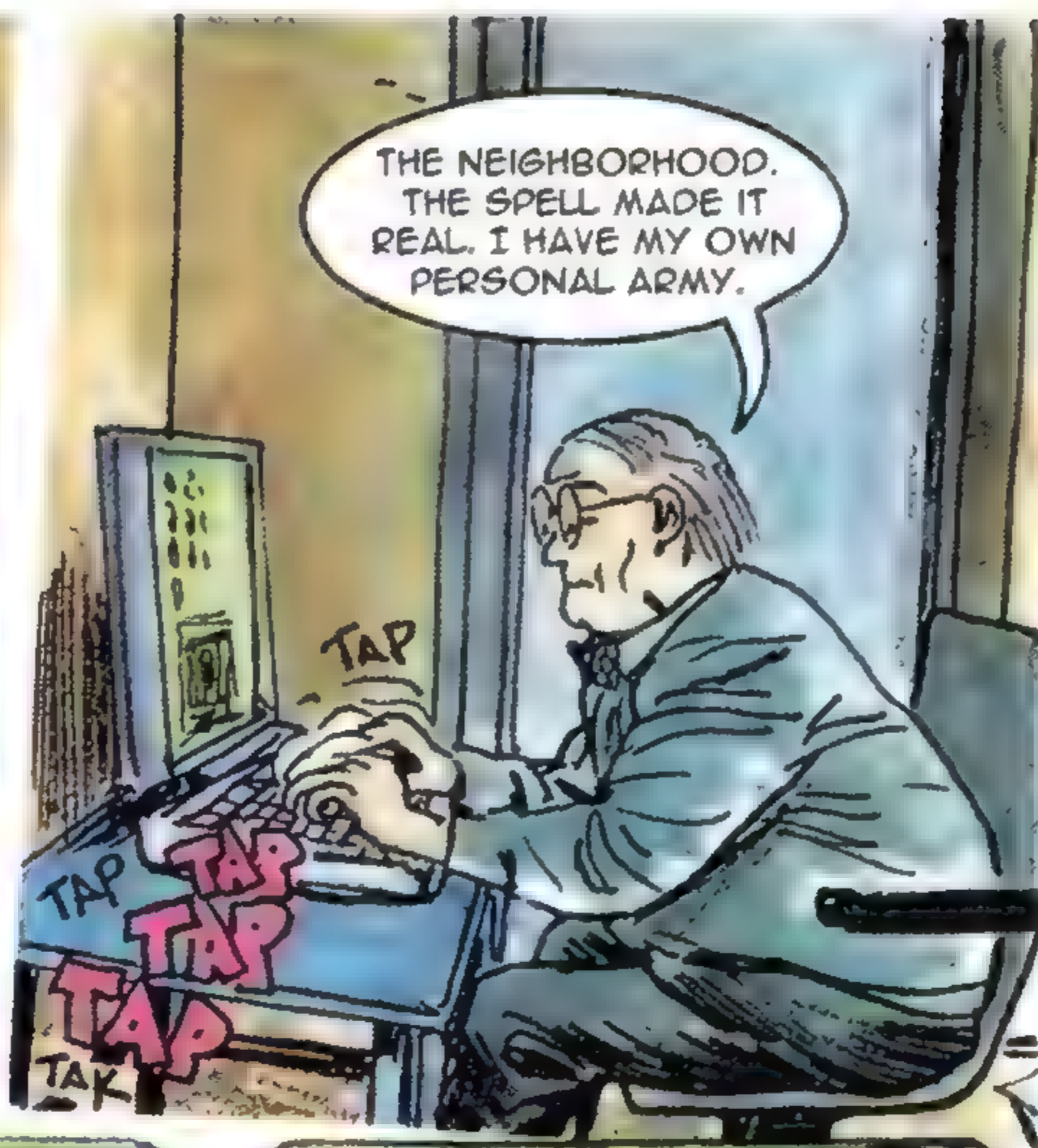
AND MAYBE I'LL ATTACH A VIRUS TO IT, JUST TO MAKE IT SPECIAL.

ADMIN: THEN YOU WILL RIP HIM

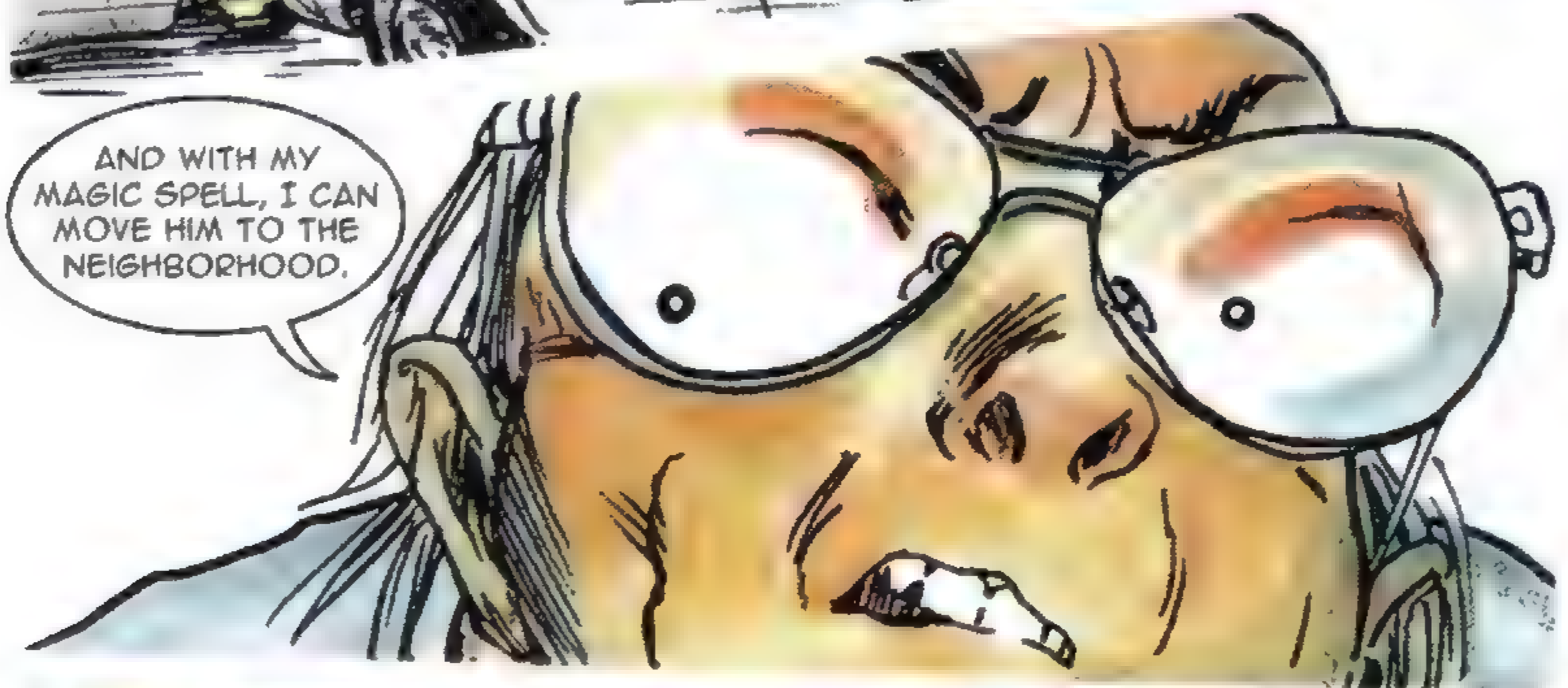
START

TAP TAP TAP TAP

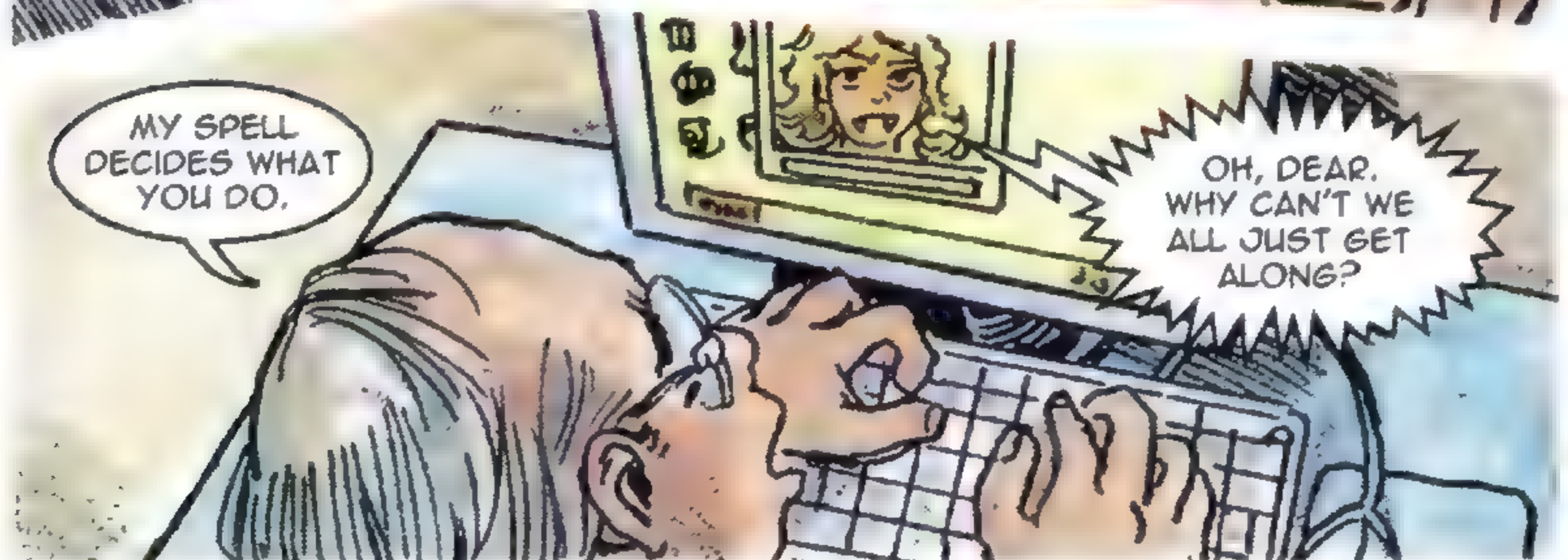
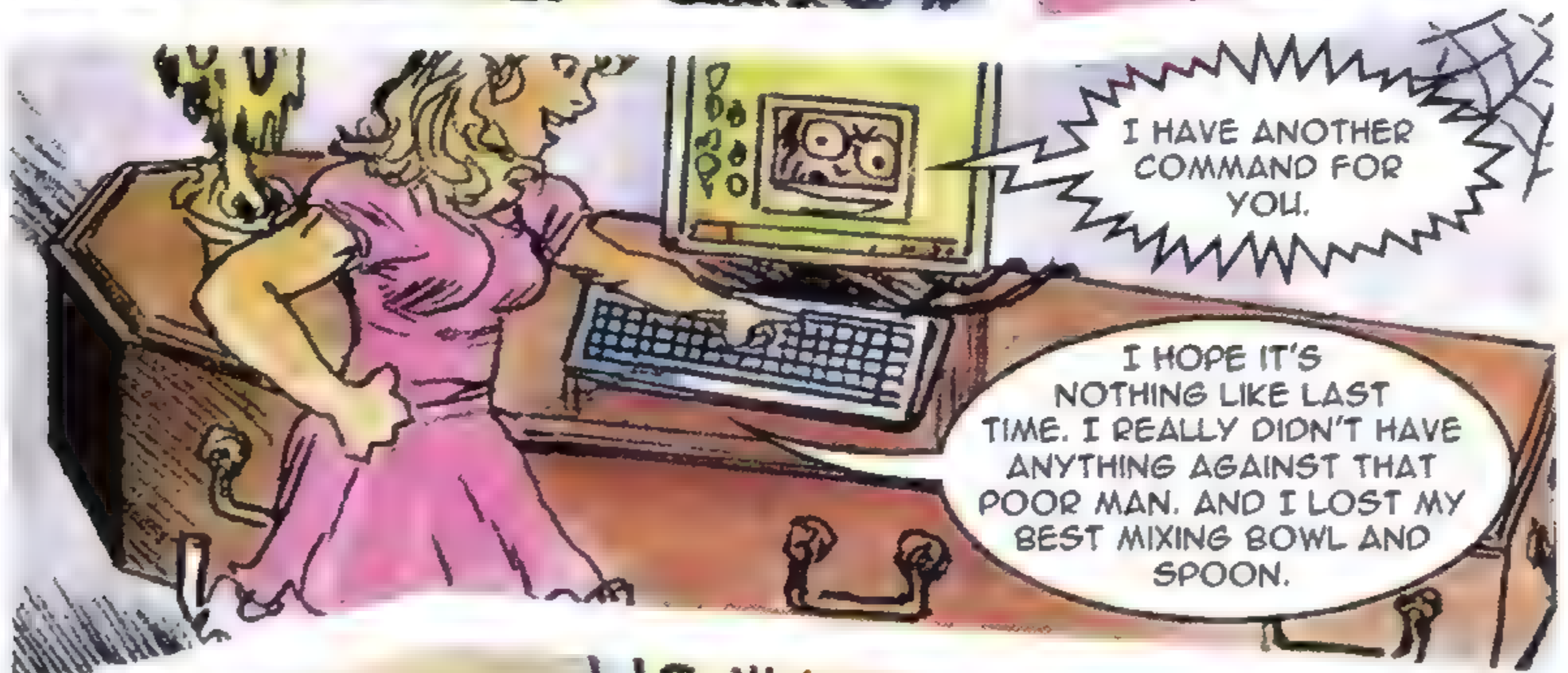










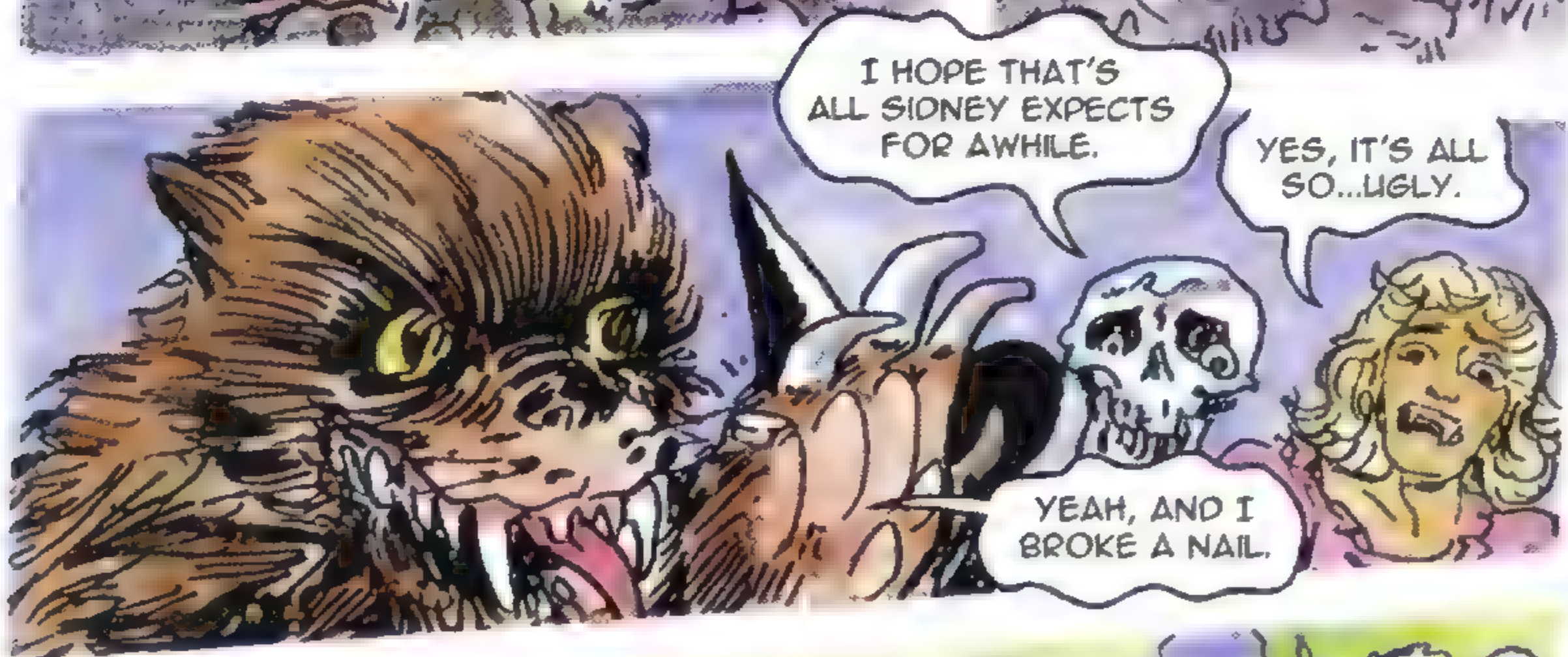




HELLO, IN
THERE. WELCOMING
COMMITTEE.

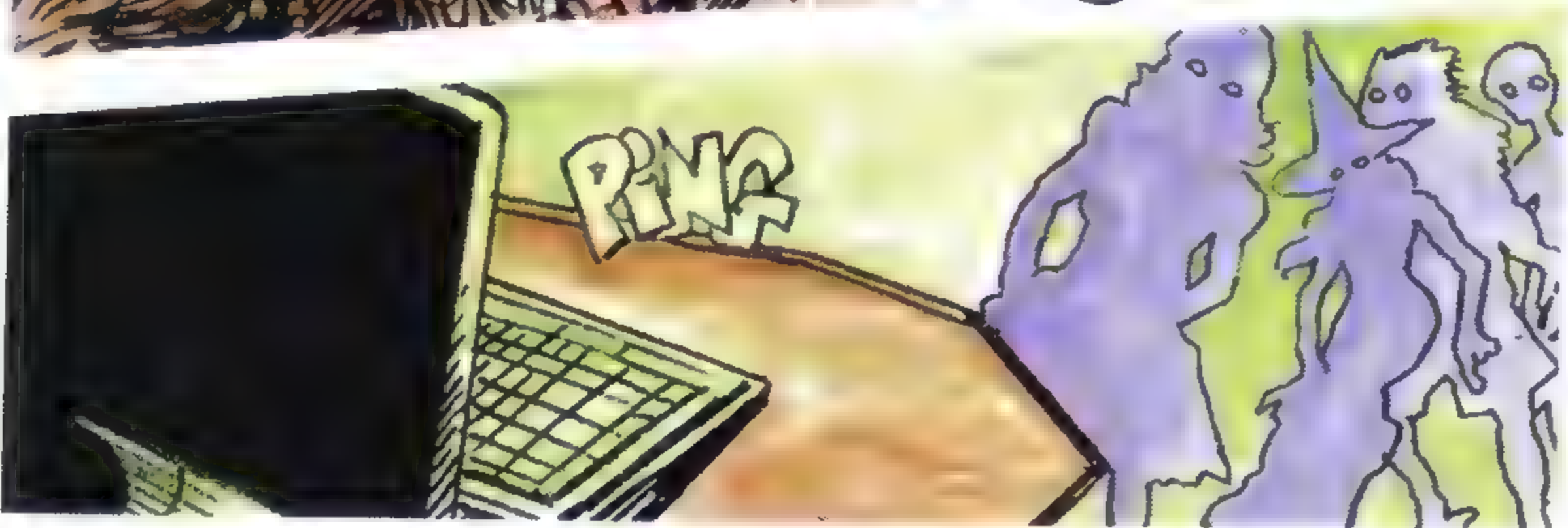


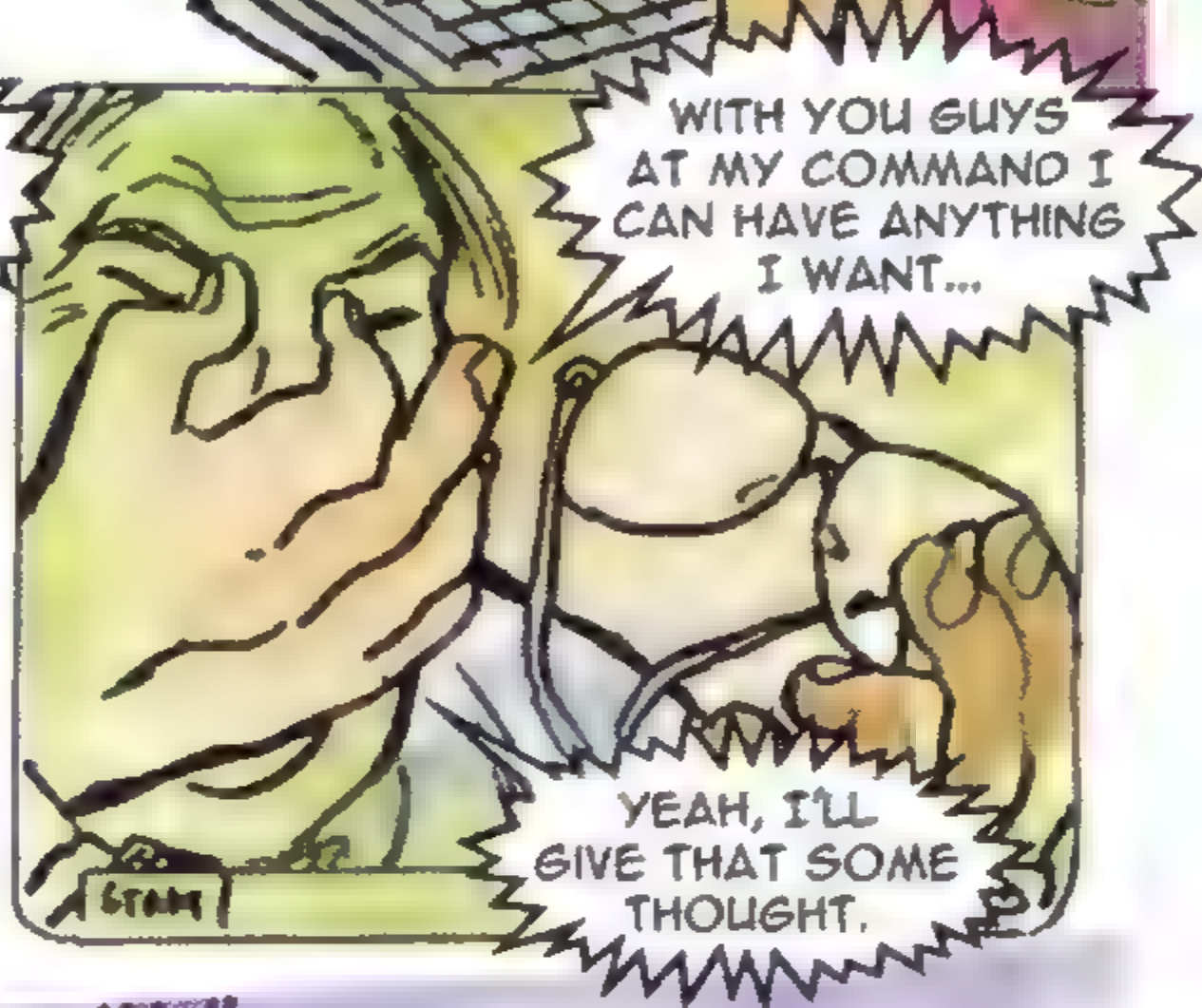
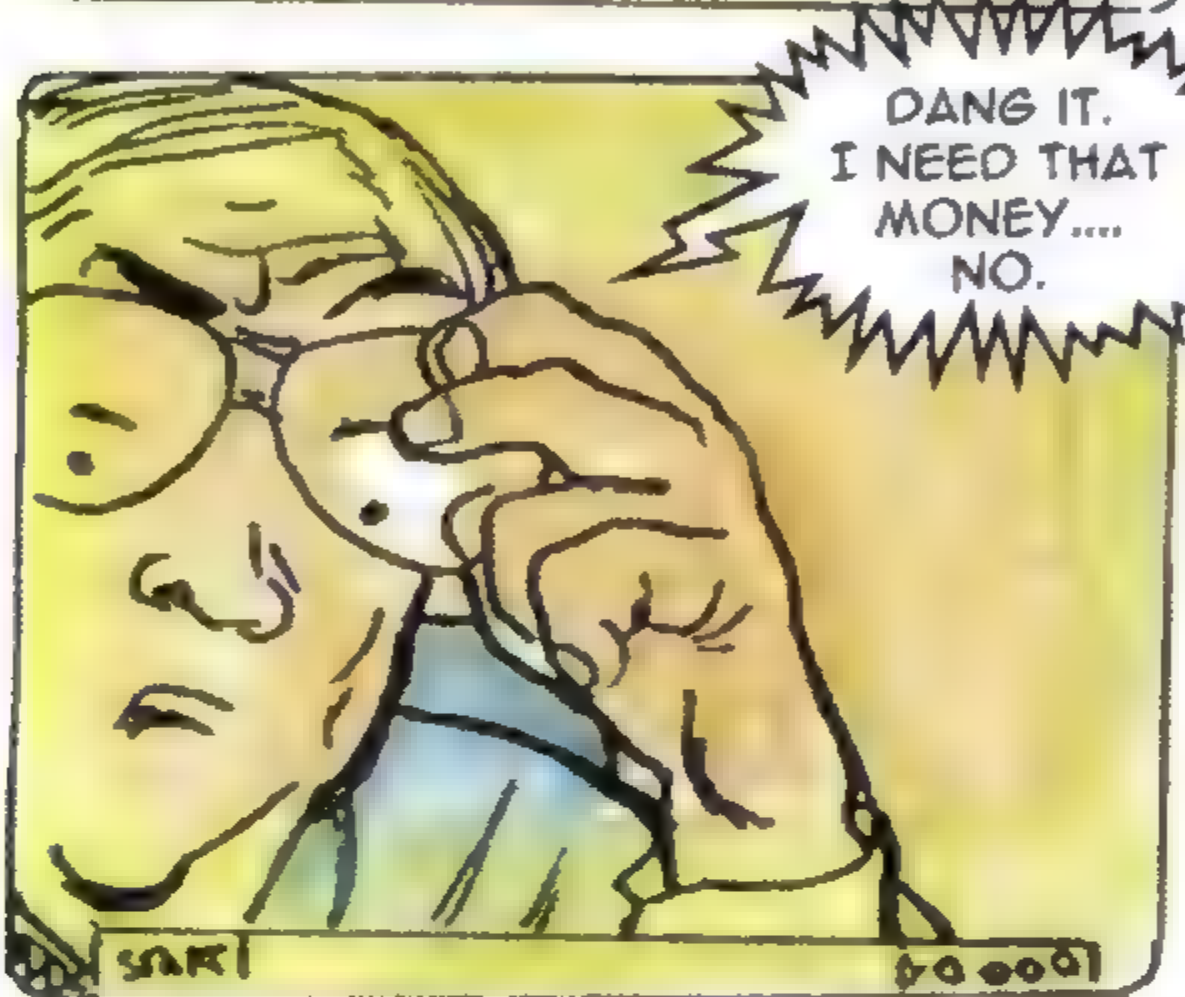
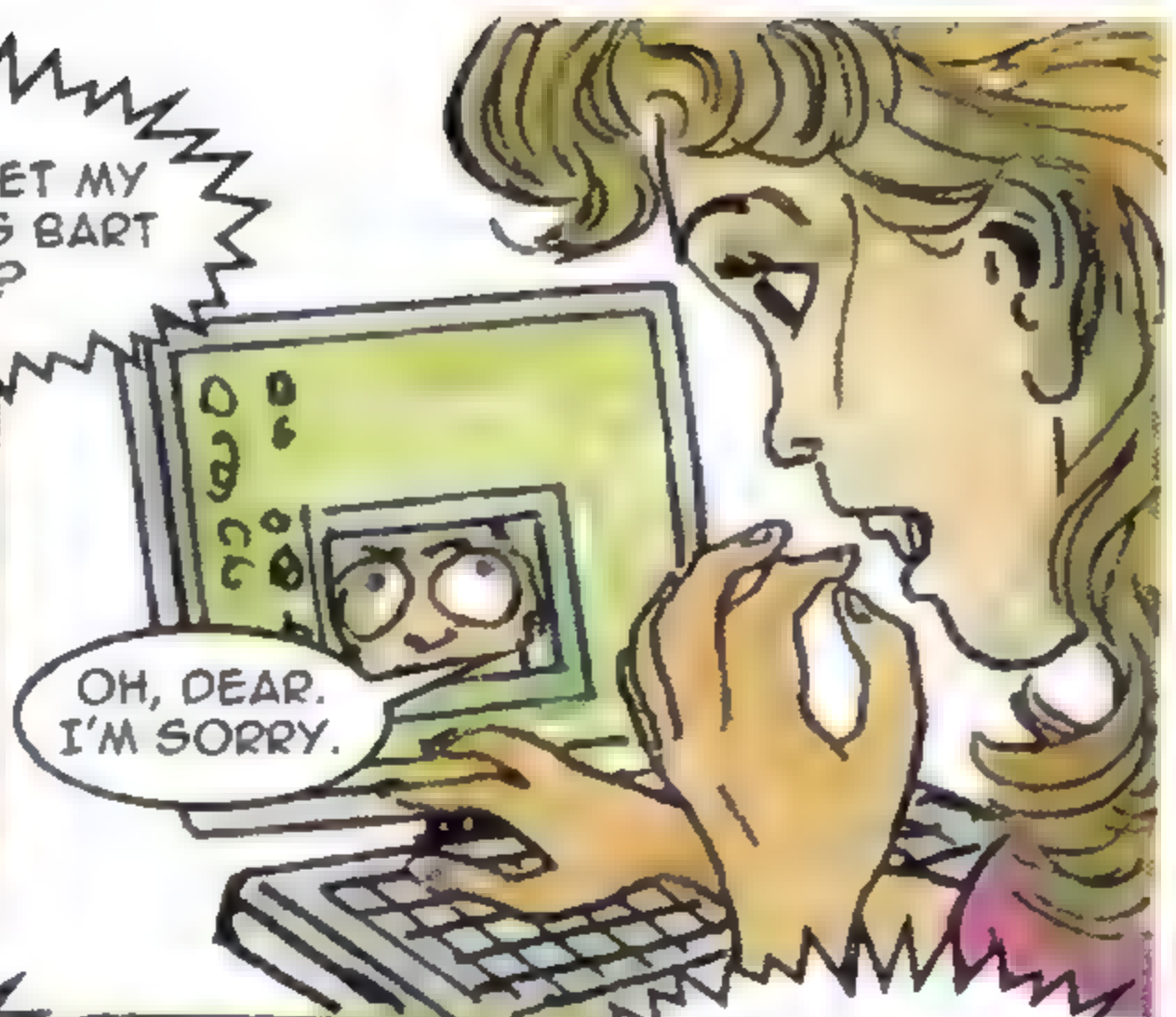
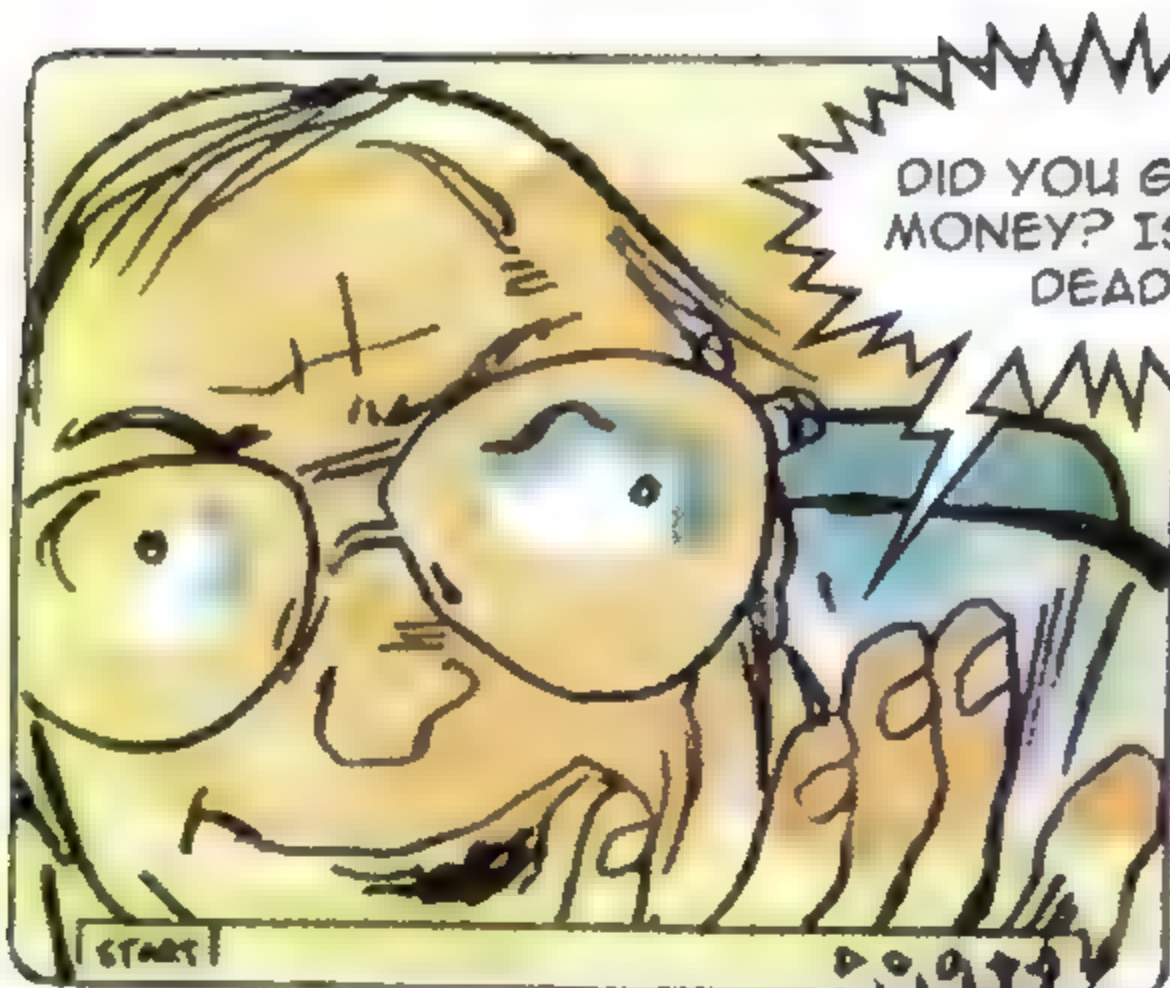




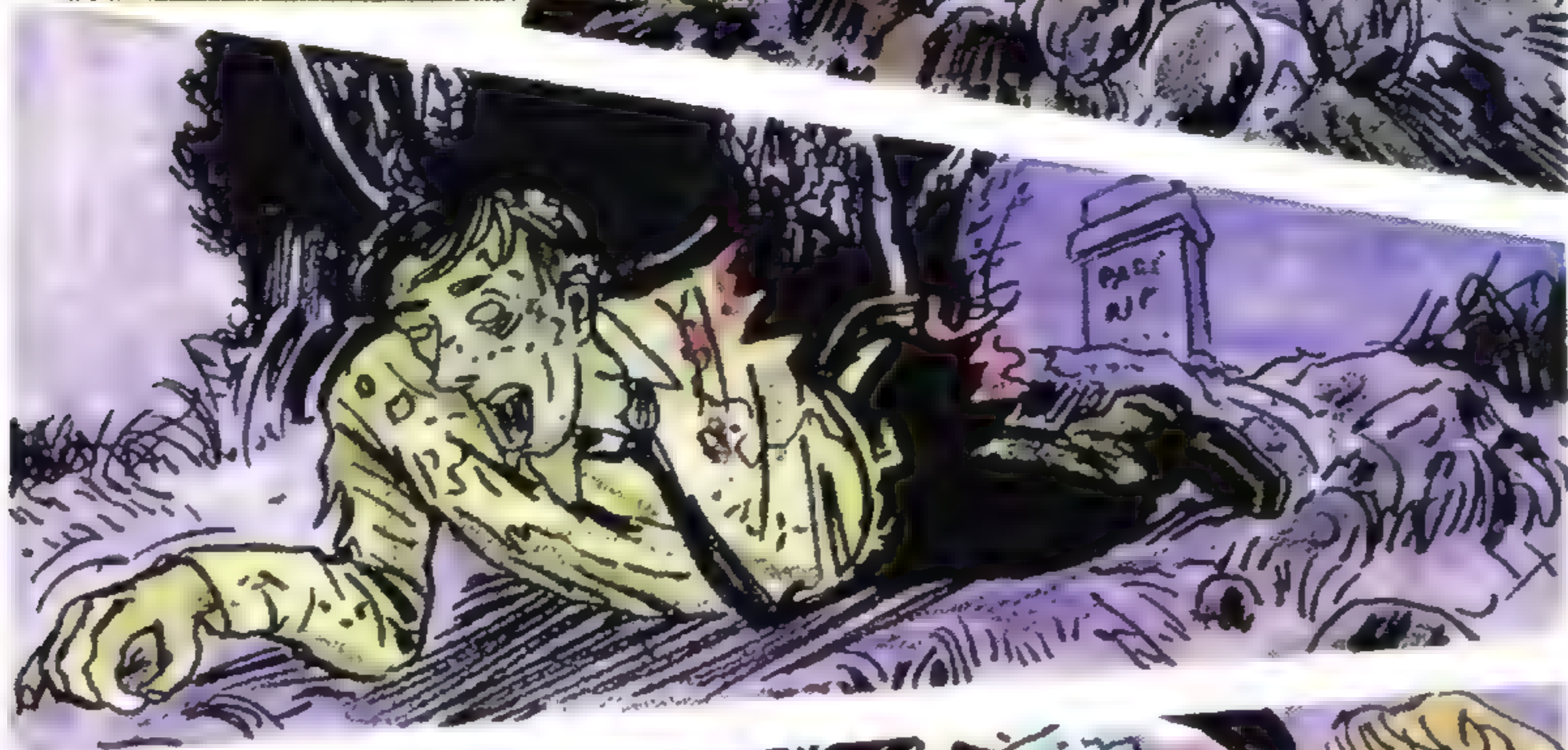
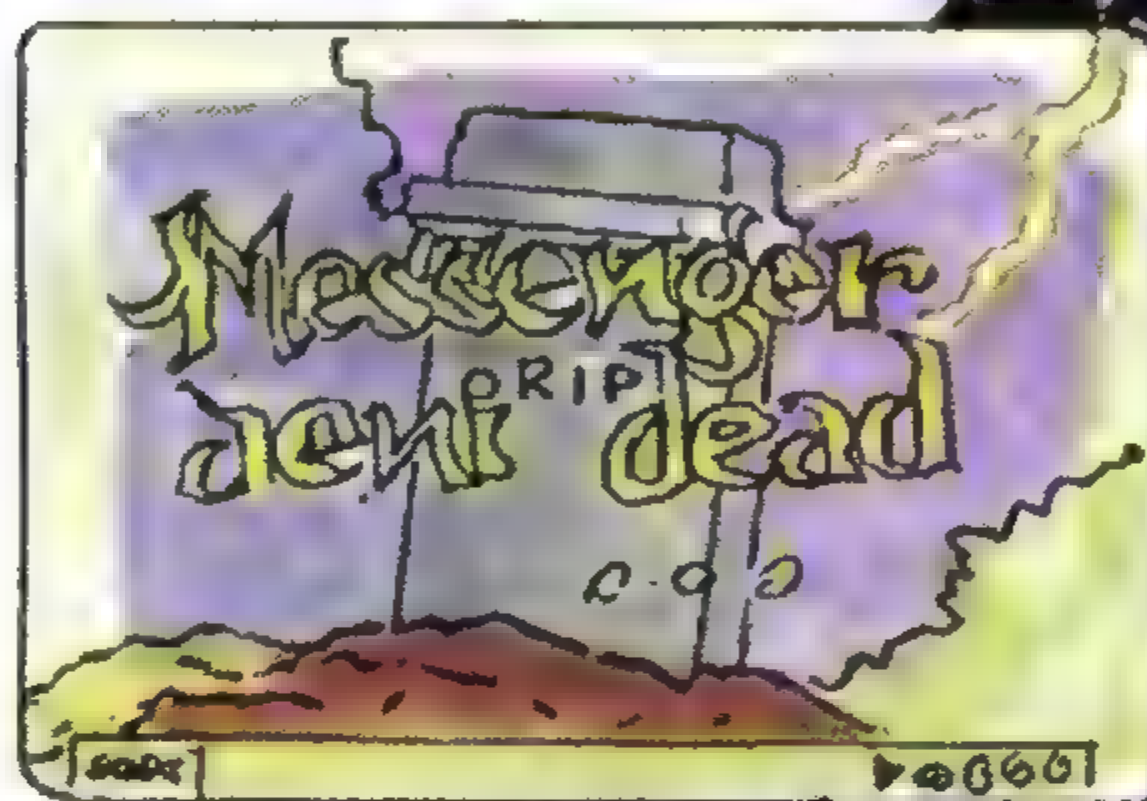
YES, IT'S ALL SO...UGLY.

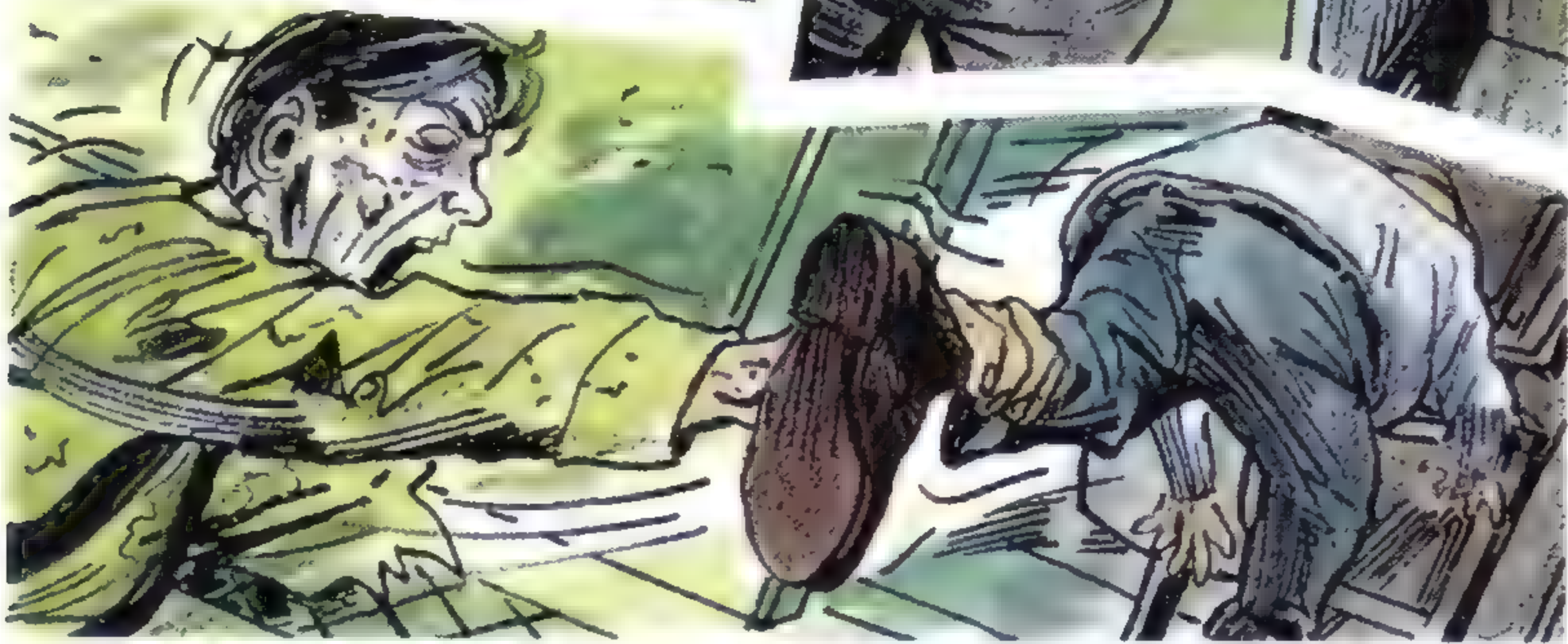
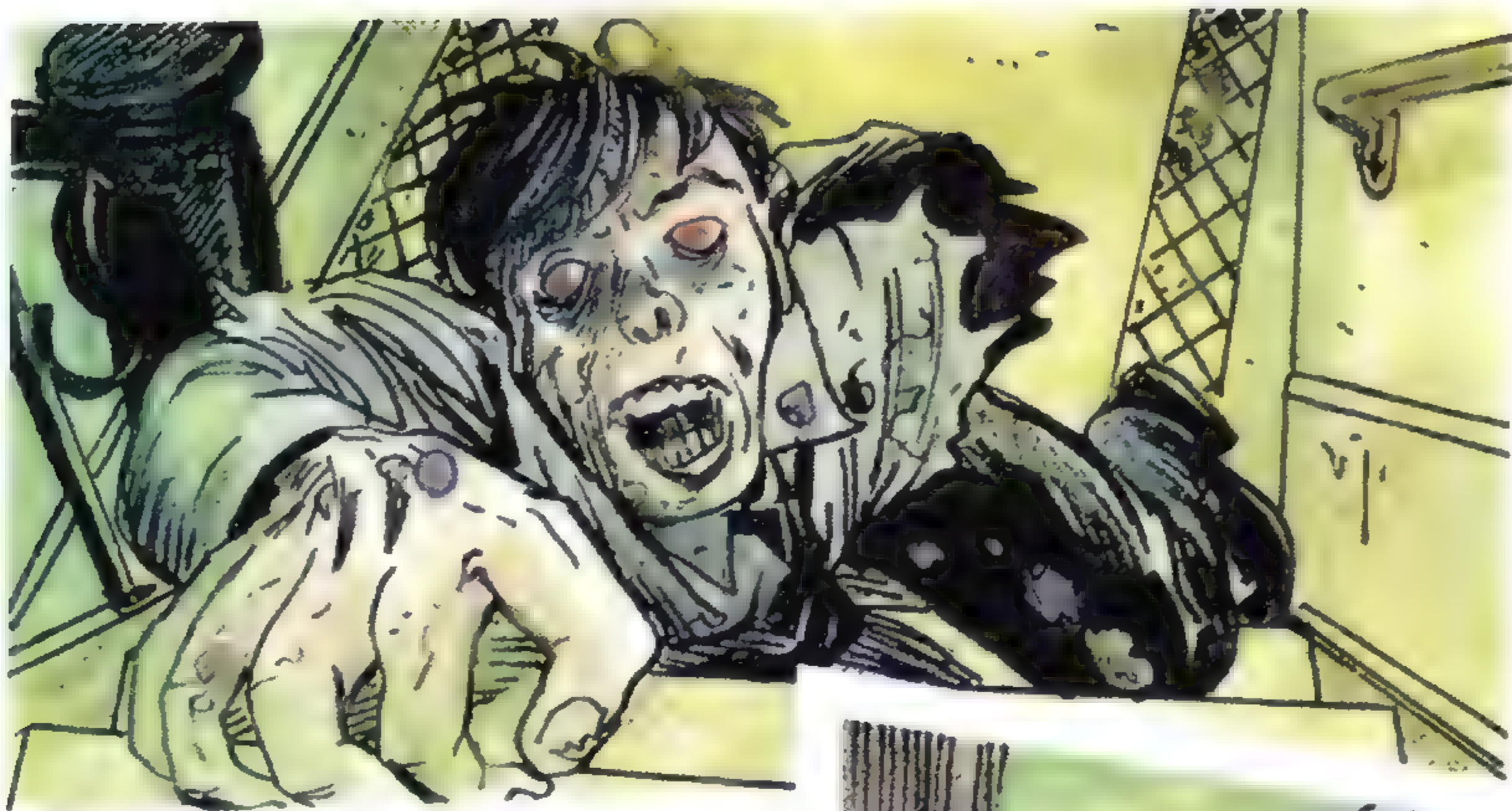
YEAH, AND I BROKE A NAIL.













YOU KNOW, IT SURE WAS NICE OF THE OLD WITCH TO INVITE US INTO THIS HOT TUB! MAYBE WE MISJUDGED HER!

I COULD BE MISERABLY MISTAKEN, BUT I'M STARTING TO SUSPECT THIS AIN'T NO HOT TUB! THAT IF WE DON'T GET OUT NOW - WE'RE SOUP!

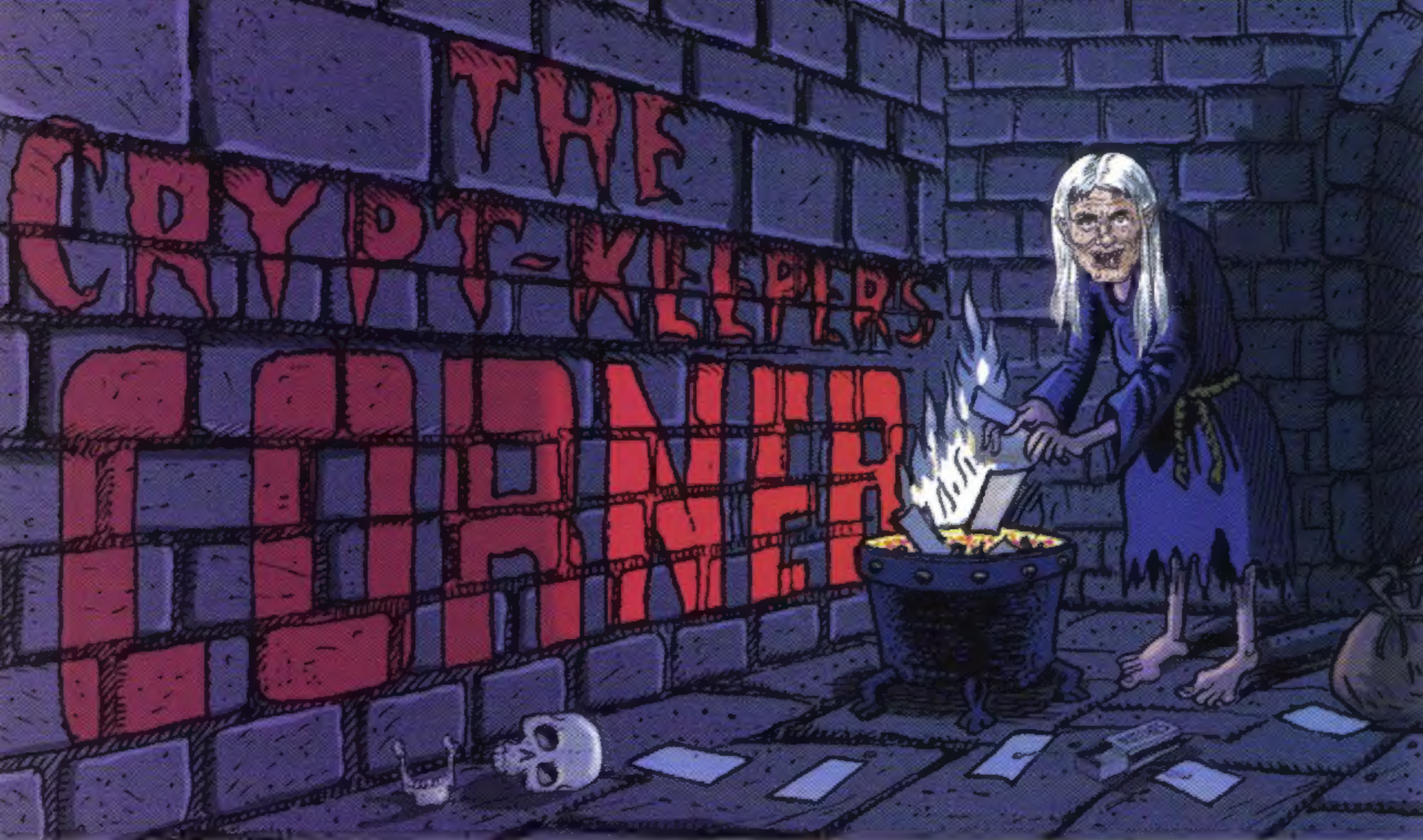
LIKE ANYONE WOULD WANT A BOWL OF CREAM OF CRYPT-KEEPER SOUP!

YOU EVER-GAGGING GHOULS ARE VITAL INGREDIENTS IN MY SPECIAL POWER-POTION!

>GASPI<
>CHOKEI<

AS MUCH AS I'D LOVE TO STAY AND BECOME SECRET SAUCE, WITCHIE-POO, MY PALE SKIN IS GETTING ALL PRUNEY - AND I'M SURE YOU DON'T WANT PRUNES IN YOUR RECIPE!

SO, LET'S MEET AGAIN NEXT TIME, KIDDIES, IN TALES FROM THE CRYPT #9! AND REMEMBER, DON'T UPSET ANY WITCHES IF YOU WANT TO STAY OUT OF HOT WATER! HEY, I'M DYING HERE!!



Gruesome greetings, my fellow Americans! It's me, your non-political Crypt-Keeper, with a somewhat SHRUNKEN SELECTION of FEARLESS FEEDBACK from our CREEPY CONSTITUENTS. Seems like our usually tight-lipped editorial types are eager to spout off on a topic we're super-sensitive about around these parts. Ironical, isn't it? In order for them to talk about censorship, we have to silence a few of our FEINDISH fans from expressing their un-DYING admiration for their favorite HORROR comicbook!

But while the POWERS-THAT-BE around here may be a benevolent dictatorship, we've always ran this letters column as a true DEMON-ocracy, er, I mean, democracy, letting you the rotten readers VOTE every issue for your favorite stories. It was a close race this time around with "Ignoble Rot" by writer Fred Van Lente and artist Mort Todd just squeaking past "Moonlight Sonata" by writers Joe and John Lansdale and artist Chris Noeth. Not much of a surprise really, as ZOMBIES are hotter than ever these days.

I'd normally tell you all about our fifth frightful collection of TALES FROM THE CRYPT stories published in paperback and hardcover by Papercutz, but that'll just have to wait till next time. Or you can simply check out the ad on our back cover. But if we're going to squeeze any mail in, we better do so now...

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I was recently at my local mall, and in the center plaza was a temporary comic vendor. He had all kinds of comic collectibles. I walked straight up to him and asked him for the EC comics. He pulled down a stack of EC originals. It was amazing. He even had THE CRYPT OF TERROR issue two. I told him I wanted to buy them so bad but I didn't have the money. He pointed me to a box of horror comics with some 1990 reprints. I snatched the only two CRYPTS he had. Even though the new ones are nothing like them, I still love them. I would be so happy if you could revive THE HAUNT OF FEAR and THE VAULT OF HORROR. (Maybe even make

them for a more mature audience...?) Or maybe you could reprint originals. Even if you don't, I'm still going to keep buying TALES FROM THE CRYPT. Congratulations and thank you for reviving a series I grew up on.

Sincerely,
Johnny Bailey

Tell me, Johnny, did the Vault-Keeper or the The Old Witch put you up to this? Those two will stoop to any level to get their mags back! And in case you didn't know, all of the original EC comics are being reprinted as beautiful big full-color hardcover books by the geeks over at Gemstone Publishing. You can buy the first few years of TALES FROM THE CRYPT (as well as THE HAUNT OF FEAR, THE VAULT OF HORROR, and many more) for a mere \$49.95 per volume – a lot cheaper than trying to get the original back issues!

Keep those emails and letters coming – we get so lonely here in the Crypt of Terror! Send letters to:

The Crypt-Keeper's Corner
40 Exchange Place, Suite 1308
New York, NY 10005

Or email your comments to the Old Editor at:

salicrup@papercutz.com

And be sure to visit papercutz.com for the latest TALES FROM THE CRYPT news!

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A SPECIAL EDITORIAL

BY CATHY GAINES MIFSUD

Before we begin, we need to make something very clear. TALES FROM THE CRYPT is not endorsing any political candidates or parties. We respect our readers' intelligence, and for those of you old enough to vote, we encourage you to do so for the candidates of your choice.

Nor are we attacking any candidates. This issue's alternate cover, featuring Gov. Sarah Palin, is our version of a political cartoon. It's simply expressing our reaction whenever we hear anything about book banning -- it's truly frightening to us. Also, and this is very important, it's very unclear whether those early reports about Sarah Palin, looking into banning books from a library back when she was the mayor of Wasilla, Alaska, are true or not. We, of course, certainly hope that they're indeed untrue.

Why is book banning frightening to us? Surely, we can't possibly object to anyone keeping objectionable material out of the hands of impressionable children. Well...

You see, from 1950 to 1956 my father, William M. Gaines, published the original TALES FROM THE CRYPT comicbooks, as well as the rest of the entire EC line of comics, which included THE HAUNT OF FEAR, THE VAULT OF HORROR, WEIRD SCIENCE, SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES, TWO-FISTED TALES, WEIRD FANTASY, WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY, CRIME SUSPENSTORIES, and one called MAD. Dad hired the very best writers, artists, and editors in the field, and even now, over 50 years later, those comics are still considered to be shining examples of some of the best comics ever created.

Unfortunately, during the height of the success of the EC horror titles, there was a movement to ban these comics, based on the misguided notion that they were somehow turning children into juvenile delinquents. Just like some politicians today try to blame video games and rap music for all sorts of social ills and for being a negative influence, back then EC comics were the target. There were newspaper and magazine articles, investigations, and finally, a Comics Code was created, a code that meant the end of almost the entire EC line of comics. Only MAD, which was turned into a magazine, managed to survive.

Now, if you actually look at and read those old EC comics, the only thing that might actually shock you is how incredibly tame they are by today's standards. Take a look at the hardcover collections of TALES FROM THE CRYPT published by Gemstone, and look closely at those stories, and you'll see that you'll be hard-pressed to find a single drop of blood. Sure, the stories were scary -- that's what they were intended to be. But they were scary in the same way that classic fairy tales are scary, or even stories from the Bible. Usually the stories were about someone who did something wrong, and how their victims were somehow avenged.

Now, does that mean we believe that every book ever published should be available to any reader of any age? Of course not! Certainly every bookstore and library has

the responsibility to make sure no unsuitable material ever winds up in the hands of children. And certainly, every bookseller has the right to decide to sell or not sell whatever they choose. The challenge is always determining exactly what is and isn't suitable for children.

When we decided to relaunch TALES FROM THE CRYPT with Papercutz, there were fans of the original comic that were surprised that we chose a publisher known for their all-ages graphic novels. Those fans wanted a new TALES FROM THE CRYPT series that would push the boundaries of modern horror, going places no TALES FROM THE CRYPT comic had ever gone before. Now, there's certainly nothing wrong with that, but we decided to go with Papercutz because we wanted TALES FROM THE CRYPT to be what the original comic was always meant to be, a scary comic for all-ages, with the very best writing and artwork possible. So, here we are, over fifty years after the original TALES FROM THE CRYPT comic was launched, and we're back trying to create a comic that we hope folks fifty years from now will still be talking about.

We certainly understand the desire to protect children from unsuitable material, but we don't believe that banning books is the answer. As the situation exists today, both librarians and booksellers act very responsibly to assure that children are not exposed to anything objectionable. Protecting children, is usually the excuse given when another agenda may be at work. As far as we can tell, teachers, parents, librarians, and booksellers are doing a great job of making sure children are indeed protected. What usually seems to be behind banning books is an attempt to repress ideas that may offer alternative political views. This is not only un-American -- blatantly violating the very concept of free speech -- but it is assuming that people are unable to come to their own informed conclusions about controversial subjects. And how could they, if only one side of a debate is presented, while literature expressing opposing views are suppressed? Banning books represents a lack of faith in the intelligence of our fellow citizens to think for themselves.

In 1990, the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, was incorporated as a non-profit charitable organization to fight censorship and defend the first amendment rights of comic book professionals throughout the United States. If you support free speech and love comicbooks, may we suggest you consider joining this noble organization? For full details, go to www.cbldf.org. I only wish they were around when my father could've used their help.

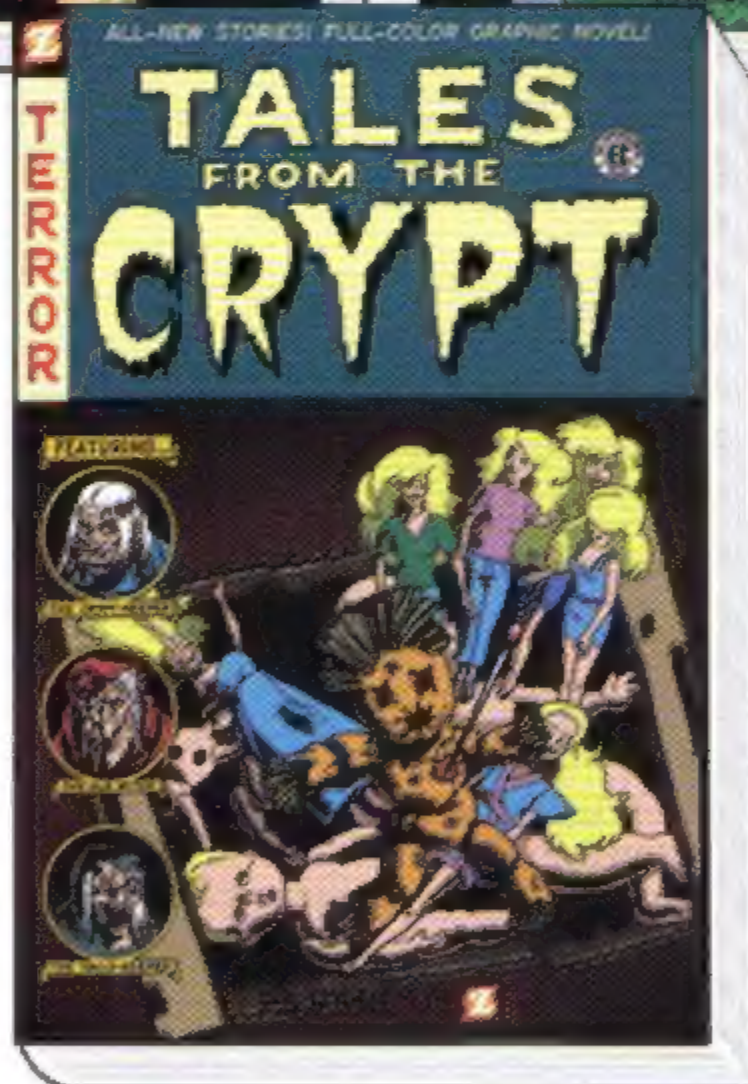
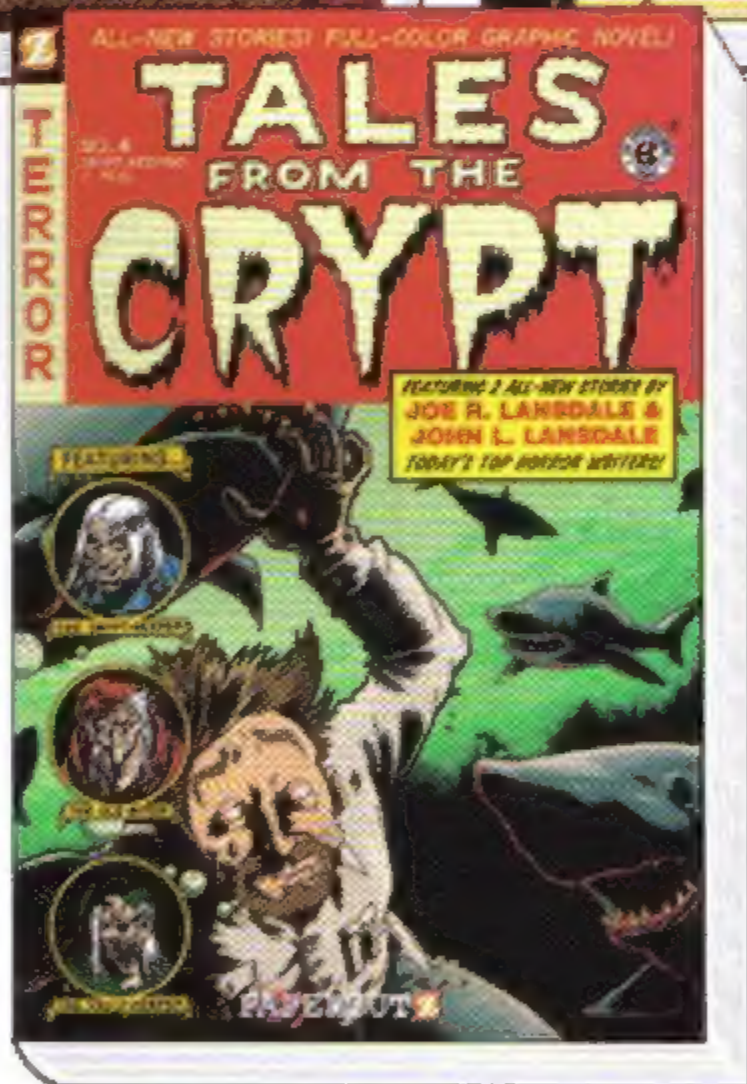
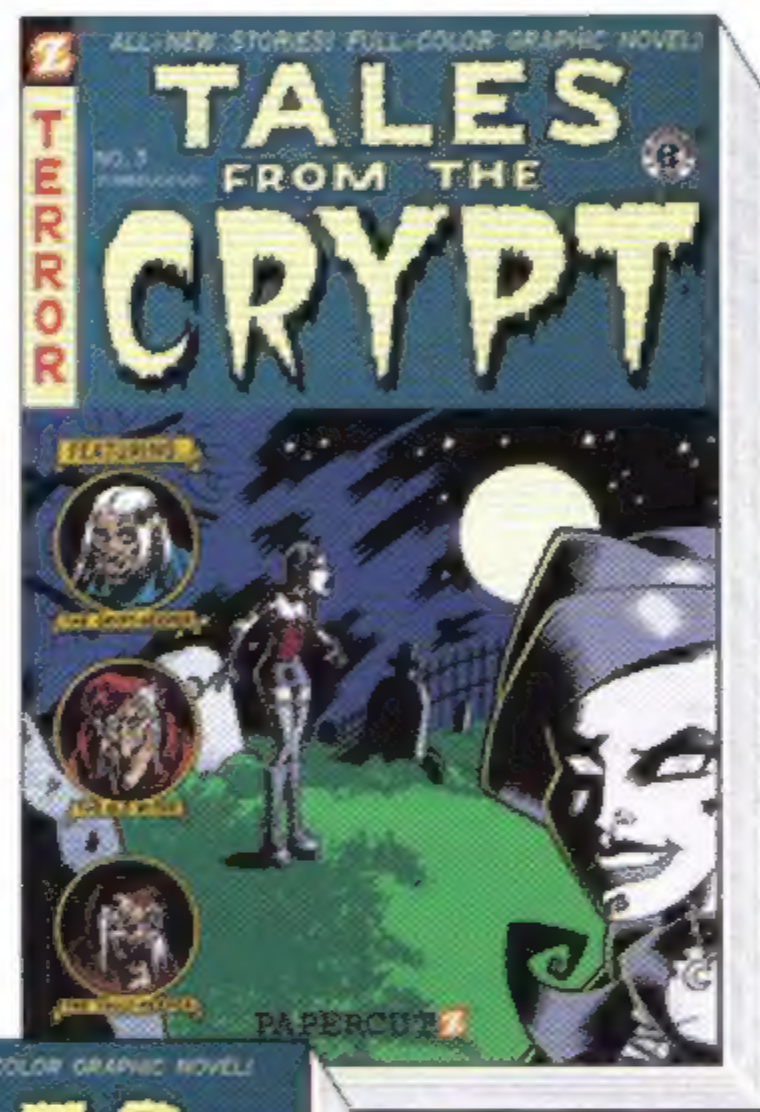
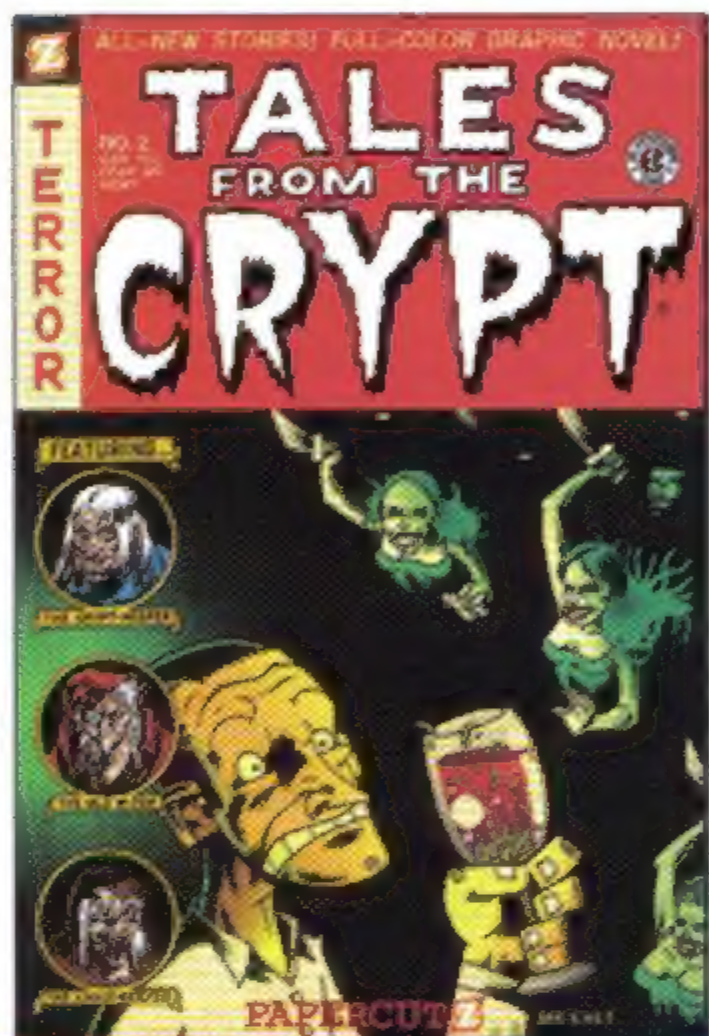
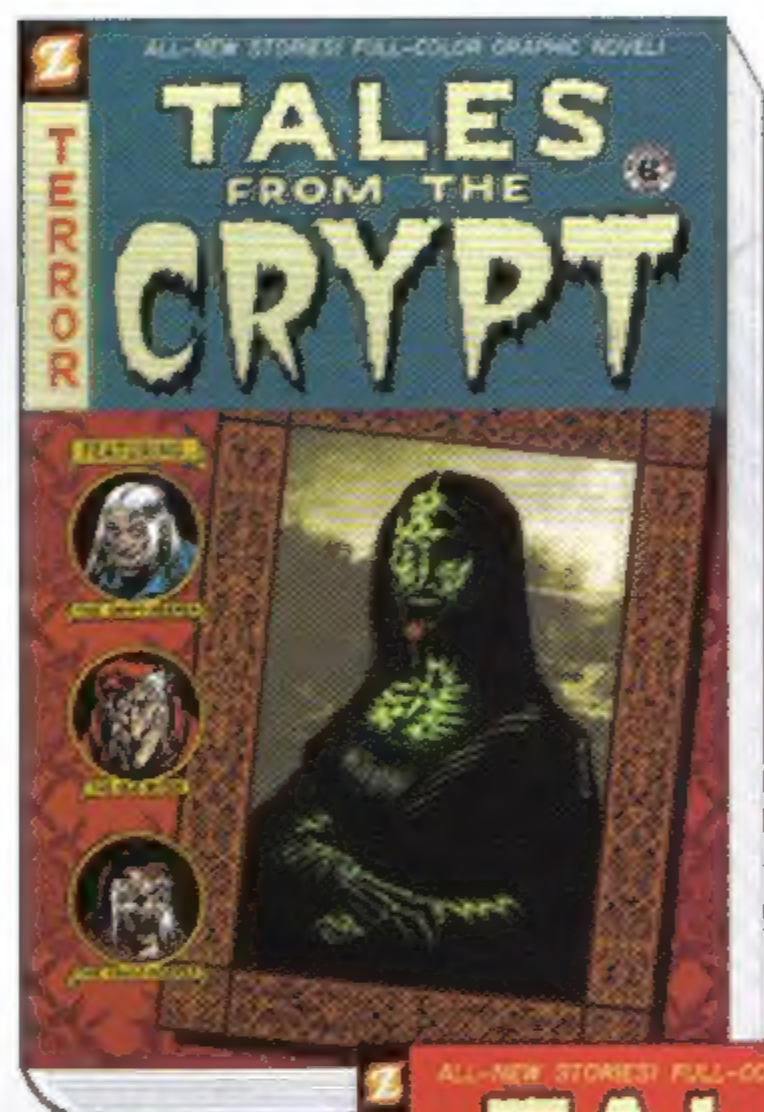
With all that said, we still like to believe that we're living in a world that recognizes that children love a good scary story, and that if it's told responsibly with good taste, it sparks their imaginations and they become the next generation of such amazing creators as George Lucas, Stephen Spielberg, Stephen King, and R.L. Stine -- all former EC comics readers.

*Thank You,
Cathy Gaines Mifsud
President William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc.*

E.C. FANS!

YOU'VE WRITTEN!
YOU'VE E-MAILED!
YOU'VE PHONED!
YOU'VE THREATENED US!
YOU'VE DEMANDED!

(BUT WE'RE COMING OUT WITH
THESE COLLECTIONS ANYWAY!)



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WildBlueZero

